MODERN MONOLOGUES

By Marjorie Benton Cooke

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BY

MARJORIE BENTON COOKE

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PREFACE

THE present-day interest in monologues, which has prompted the publication of this little book, seems to warrant a foreword of comment.

The monologue is a character study in little; the apotheosis of a chosen individuality. It may be simply a rough sketch, or it may be a finished miniature—it depends entirely upon the monologist.

Three things seem to be essential to a successful monologist. First, the power of keen observation. The man who intends to characterize must be a student of character. He must find a new text and a new chapter in every street-car, and on every street corner. In the second place, he must be able to impersonate—to sink his own personality completely in that of the character he wishes to represent. He must, by walk, expression, intonation, and gesture, become that character. In the third place, he must be able to

make an audience understand the unspoken half of the conversation, and he must have the ability to make the one character he delineates typical of a whole class.

All the character studies in this book are intended to be spoken by one person, although the monologue form is not always retained. In some of the sketches the reader is required to do double duty and impersonate two speakers, which necessitates, of course, complete change of character.

No definite rules can be insisted upon as to the best method of presenting monologues. All the little studies in this book have stood the test of trial before varied audiences. The successful rendition of them must be left to the discretion of the reader.

M. B. C.

MODERN MONOLOGUES

CUPID PLAYS COACH

SCENE—*The porch of a golf club. The men and girls are having tea. There are a tea-table and a chair at one side of the porch.*

TIME—*Afternoon of the Annual Woman's Tournament.*

Enter GWENDOLIN PHILLIPS, *winner of the cup.*

GWEN *speaks*

HELLO, everybody! You all beat me in, did n't you?

[*Takes off hat and jabs imaginary pins through it.*]

Well, I had to stop and talk to every one I met—that 's the bother with being a babbler!

[*Looks from one to another in surprise.*]

What's this? What's all this? Oh—nonsense! I mean—oh, thank you—but talk about my luck—not my victory. It's all luck in golf!

[*Nods toward the girl at tea-table.*]

Yes, I will have some tea, thanks. Just put everything in it! [*Motions to man.*]

No, no, now don't get up, I don't want to sit down—I'd much rather sit back here and swing my feet, as no perfect lady would ever do! [*Perches on porch rail.*]

Pass over my tea, will you, Dicky Tod?

[*Takes tea-cup from him.*]

Much obliged. That looks nice—and tastes better. Funny thing about luck, is n't it? Some days, my little God-o'-Luck just seems to sit on the tip-top of every club I've got. I simply can't miss the ball—not if I try. Just make my arms go, and he does the rest! [*Sips tea.*]

Tell you something—secret—everybody! I'd never think of going into a match, like to-day's for instance, without burning two fat sticks of Japanese incense before my God-o'-Luck! [*Laughs and sips her tea.*]

Pagan, did you say, Dicky Tod? Of course, I'm a pagan—we all are! Non-

sense—why, we are! We all bow down before idols of some sort. Oh, there are lots of kinds, Dicky—wood, brass, and stone! As for you, my son, I think we all know the size, shape, and complexion of your idol.

[*Suggestive glance toward girl at the tea-table.*]

So you need n't cast any pebbles at mine. Very good tea, Mabel.

[*Goes and deposits her cup on table.*]

No, not just now, thanks. You come out and let me spill the tea. Oh, come on—I 'll drink more than all the rest of you—so it will just save time. That 's right.

[*She sits at tea-table.*]

Won't you have a cup yourself, dear? How will you have it? Two sugars? And a lemon—'scuse fingers. [*Hands her cup.*]

Anybody else ready? Well, what did you go round in, Margaret?

Did you really? Good for you! What did you do Wee Drap in? You don't say! [*Confidentially.*] I give you my word of honor, I never worried over anything in my life as I did over that hole! I 've tried for it all night long in my dreams for two mor-

tal weeks. Those awful dreams, you know —that could n't come true! I always seem to be swinging my club, and swinging my club, and yet I never hit the ball. Then I open my eyes and see it speeding off toward the fifth, and I know I must have missed the fourth and have to come back, tripling my strokes. Whew! Each night I 've dreaded going to sleep, and facing the tragedy again!

[*Quick change of tone to gaiety.*]

Have some more tea, some one—do! Thank you, Dicky, I thought I could depend on you.

[*Takes his cup and refills it as she talks.*]

Dicky, my boy, you 're a tank for tea. And when you 're old—oh, very—very old —as old as I am—you 'll turn into a little, crumpled, green old man, like a leaf of Oolong tea! [*Recites tragically.*]

Here lies the grave of Dicky Tod,
Who lies in peace, beneath the sod.
Alas—he died to drink no more,
Quite steeped in tea—instead of lore!

[*Laughing.*] Not so bad—offhand!

[*Sudden change to serious manner.*]

Dicky, see what I've done for you! Mabel is convulsed with emotion. Never mind, Mabel dear—don't take it so to heart—the worst has not yet come!

[*In her ordinary tone.*]

Won't somebody have some more tea? It's a drug on the market since I took charge. I'll have to drink it myself.

[*Pours herself a cup—then in an over-carefully unconscious manner.*]

Here comes Mr. Lawrence.

[*Shakes hands with him.*]

How do you do? Will—will you have some of my wares? You hate tea? Oh, what a Philistine! [*Deprecatory tone.*]

Now, that's very gallant, I'm sure—but I'm loath to dispense unwelcome favors. Thank you, Mr. Lawrence. I've just been telling them all about my luck. The idea of my doing Wee Drap in four! I had expected to do it in fourteen with much effort! I surprised myself—I even surprised my caddy—and that's a triumph worth boasting of! What's the matter?

[*Looks from one to another.*]

Going? Is it *Exeunt omnes?* You desert

too—Dicky? Going to burn incense before your idol? Hope she proves kind! Good night—see you to-morrow, Mabel. Good-by.

[*Nods farewell after them, then turns to Lawrence.*]

Well—Mr. Lawrence, we seem to be the only survivors. Survival of the fittest? [*Laughs.*] Modest soul! *Will* you look at that sunset—let 's go over to the other end of the porch, where we can see it better.

[*She moves to other side of porch and sits on railing.*]

Yes, it *has* been a happy day for me. One likes to excel in things, even if it 's only golf! Oh, but I *don't,* you know. I 'm not good at all in lots of games. I can play tennis—I play at racquets, but I 'm a perfect *dub* at croquet. Love? Ah—that 's a game I never play. It has n't any rules, you know—and I wont play a game without rules.

[*Interrupting him, smiling.*]

Now, that 's just the trouble—these games where you make your own rules—you never know who wins! That 's very gallant, but I 'm not at all sure I would. W-e-l-l, you see, I play at so many games,

I really don't think I have time for any more. [*Surprised tone.*]

Oh, you want to teach me! You 're a professional? Only amateur—well—that 's encouraging. Is it—is it a very hard game to understand? As easy as that? Well—I may be able to grasp it. I warn you, though —I 'm awfully stupid.

[*The bland expression of a "seeker for knowledge" spreads over her face.*]

Now what? You choose—you play partners, do you? Well—I—I 've chosen. You have to *tell* whom you 've chosen? Oh, well —I 'll choose again. I choose—well—I choose you. Now what?

[*Looks straight ahead, repeating his words.*]

"Make up my mind that you are the only man in the world!" [*Laughs.*]

It 's rather an egotistical game from the standpoint of the teacher, is n't it?

[*Seriously.*]

Of course, I could n't make up my mind on a subject like that—offhand. I—I might practise that. Go on.

[*She looks at him inquiringly.*]

What 's the matter? Can't you remember the next step? I thought you said you knew this game? What do *you* do?

[*Looks straight ahead, quoting him again.*]

" Forget everything, and everybody—see only her face, with its laughing eyes, it 's wicked mouth, and the dimple in her chin! "

[*Laughs mockingly.*]

Well, I 'm afraid your experience is n't going to help me at all. I can't go round seeing nothing but wicked mouths—how 'd I ever play golf?

[*Suddenly becomes very serious.*]

Oh, I beg your pardon—you have to be serious—do you? That 's one of the rules, I suppose. I hope I 'll be able to grasp the rules by and by. [*Looks at him slyly.*]

We don't seem to get along very fast, do we? What do I do now?

[*Breathless surprise.*]

Just love you! Is—is that all? I—I think that 's one of the things I 'd have to practise.

[*Suddenly.*]

And what are you doing all this time, may I ask?

[*Surprise, embarrassment, tenderness flash across the girl's face.*]

Really! as much as that?

[*Dodges quickly.*]

Oh! is that the way you score?

[*Stern and serious tone.*]

May I ask who taught *you* this game? Oh, Cupid—the great professional—no wonder you play so well! [*Rises.*]

But see—the sun has quite gone, and we must go. I know I don't know very much about it yet—but I might take another lesson to-morrow. Come along, Partner!

A MODERN BECKY SHARP

SCENE—*My Lady's boudoir.*
Discovered—My Lady stretched on a couch.

She speaks

[*Yawns and stretches.*] I 'm tired, and sleepy, and cross! Tired—and sleepy—and cross! To-night—*my* night—the night I 've worked for, and slaved for, and lied for—and now, I 'm tired, and sleepy, and cross! That 's the way. You want a thing with all your might and main, you work for it—and get it—and then you wonder why you wanted it. Here I am to-night, on a pinnacle of accomplishment, and the hateful little fiend in my head saying, " Why, in the name of all that 's silly, have you spent two whole years trying to get an invitation to one of Mrs. Jarvin's dinners? " You know why, little fiend—you know why. Mrs.

Jarvin is our social St. Peter; she jangles her keys in the ears of the great unworthy, and her nod—her nod admits you to the innermost shrine. I 've an insatiable curiosity about shrines, myself—and St. Peter has nodded. Well, I 've worked for it. Like the Little Corporal, I 've climbed up over the dead bodies of all the friends God ever gave me, and God was n't very generous to me—not very! [*Quick vicious smile.*]

I suppose that little Winston cat will be there. I have n't forgotten our last conversation about the Jarvin dinners—she had her first card, and came to gloat.

"Of course, Mrs. Anstrom, you 're going to the Jarvin's dinner?"

"I? Oh, no—I understand this is her annual duty dinner to the *bourgeoisie*—*you 're* going, of course."

"My dear," said the Winston cat, "you 'd sell your dirty little soul to go!"

And I would have—I would have. It 's the only time I ever knew her to blunder upon the truth.

I must be careful with the women—not too grateful to the Jarvin herself. I must cultivate that little male annex of hers—and

make myself irresistible to her ugly daughter. I 'll snub the Winston royally. I may allow Mrs. Lambert to ask me to call—we 'll see. I must be seen for at least five minutes with Mrs. George Alexander—and then—and then for the men, and diplomacy out of the window. A pair of eyes and a wit for the men—and hang your ancestors!

[*Rises nervously.*]

I must be calm, cool, and collected. I must remember that I 'm not wedded to luck—Lord, no—I 'm wedded to Jack Anstrom,—may something happen to stop his stupid old mouth!

[*Looks at her watch, and turns quickly to touch a bell.*]

Marie—why are n't you here to dress me, Marie? Why do you keep me waiting? Don't you know that I dine at the Jarvin's to-night? What? Toothache—what do you mean by having toothache to-night? Why don't you have your teeth pulled? Where 's my gown, Marie? Toothache, or none, you should have had it here. Has n't come? It 's fate—fate against me! Well, it is n't the first time I 've gone up against fate. Get a cab, and go for it, Marie. No

—have Annette call up Madam on the phone —tell her I give her fifteen minutes in which to get that gown here. Hurry up! This is absurd, I 'm getting all excited. Well—did you tell her? Come along, then, and do my hair. Oh, what a face!—why did n't you go to the dentist this afternoon? No time? You have all the time there is. Money? Why, what do you do with all the money I give you, Marie? Is it—is it really as long as that? Well, I see I must get you a check from somewhere, Marie. You 're a very good maid, Marie—the best I ever had, and very patient. I appreciate it. I hope you 'll get your reward sometime—Marie—in heaven, perhaps.

Now do your best by me, Marie. I want to make a great sensation to-night. I want every woman in the room to envy me my maid. No—pile it up high in puffs and rolls, such as only you can accomplish. Take care —you 're pulling. No, it does n't need curling, it 's curly enough. I don't want it to look like the Winston's. She always looks to me as if she dressed in her sleep, and then her husband bustled in and hastily did her hair. Loosen that—no higher—

there! Dear me, I never was so red in my life! When you 're young and get excited, you 're very, very pink—when you 're middle-aged and excited, you get very red, and after that you get very purple. I wonder how many more years of the red stage I 'm good for! [*Smiles.*] Marie, you lie so delightfully, that one is tempted to believe you. More hairpins? Through?

[*Takes hand-glass and inspects herself.*]

Oh, Marie, I don't like it at all. What is the matter with it? Have you toothache in your finger-tips? Now don't cry about it. Go away, Marie, go to bed, or to the dentist, or somewhere out of my sight. No, I don't want any one to help me, I 'll dress myself. [*Watches Marie depart.*]

Teeth! What are we coming to, when our very servants have teeth! Shall I take that hair down or let it be?

[*Turns at entrance of woman.*]

Oh, you 've come at last, have you? I thought, perhaps, Madam expected me to call for the gown on my way to dinner! Get it out at once, please—I 'm in a great hurry. What 's the matter at Mme. Mer-

ton's that she sends out a gown ten minutes before it's to be worn? Sickness in the work-room? Nonsense—that's no excuse!

[*Gets into skirt, and struggles to get band to meet.*]

Well, whom did you make this band for? Certainly not for me! It's good three inches too small. Let it out—let it out—I can't breathe in the thing! *Now,* what are you going to do? Well, you've got to do something—let it out—rip it—pin it—but do something! [*Takes deep breath.*]

Well, that's better. It isn't particularly comfortable yet—but I can breathe occasionally. Get me into the rest of the creation. I know I oughtn't to wear this color tonight—with this red face and all this sparkle, I look like a bird of paradise. What do *you* think—oh, of course, you wouldn't know. Touch that bell, please. Now, where does this go? [*Indicates shoulder-strap.*] I don't like the thing! Oh, here you are—Marie, what do you think? Do I look like a Christmas tree with all the candles lit? Brilliant, you think? Well—assume a virtue, if you have it not! Hook this business, please. Go away, now, Marie;

you give me the horrors. Who 's that? No—don't come in, Jack. Stay where you are. Now I know it—I have a watch right here, and I know the exact time. Ouch—take care—it 's a pin! Jack, what have you done to yourself? You look exactly like a broiled lobster. No, no, that 's too tight. What strange misfortunes you do have with your dress shirts, dear—they always bulge in, or bulge out. Why don't you sometime strike a medium bulge? Now—don't tell me how I look—I know! [*To woman.*] Do you consider me into this thing? Tell Mme. Merton that I think it an abominable failure, and that I 'll come and tell her so myself to-morrow. Throw this around me, dear. Take care—take care, my dear man, you 're not putting a blanket on a horse. Come along. As far as I 'm concerned, I feel more like a cannibal feast than a dinner with St. Peter! [*Exit.*]

HER DAY AT HOME

SCENE—*Drawing-room.*
Discovered—The hostess and her best friend, who assists.

The hostess speaks

[*Sighs.*] Is n't it absurd? Five o'clock, and about ten people here! If you announce your hours from four to six, everybody makes it a point to arrive at five-thirty, and pack your rooms for twenty minutes. The next time I send out cards, I shall say from one o'clock on, and I 'll have a mob here on the stroke of one, to see whether or not I 'm crazy. . . . Oh, yes—Hartleys'? I was there—were you? Why, of course, I talked to you for five minutes, did n't I? How stupid of me! To tell you the truth, I have n't an idea whom I saw, or what I did. Did you ever see such a jam? I don't see how that woman has the courage to entertain in that tiny

house. I was crushed and pulled—my gown was torn; I give you my word, I never expected to get out of there fully clad! When I was finally squeezed into the dining-room by the crowd back of me, I succeeded, after ages of patient waiting, in getting a slim sandwich and a small piece of chocolate. Give you my word, my dear, that 's all I got! It certainly was an ideal afternoon.

[*Inspects her empty rooms.*]

I am so tired of standing here, are n't you? You know I can't see why, with all our modern improvements, we don't renovate our methods of entertaining. Some sort of big social clearing-house, you know. I could send in a list of people I wanted to entertain, the man in charge would issue the cards and receive the replies, and I 'd be happy, and the guests would be happy—Oh, how do you do, Mrs. Marvel—so glad to see you. So good of you to come early. You know Mrs. Wescott? Yes, it *is* a vile day—[*To Mrs. W.*] Here they come thick and fast! [*Gushingly.*] How do you do, Mrs. Thompson—so glad to see you. You know Mrs. Wescott? Yes, is n't it? I never have any luck in weather. . . . Mrs. Gennett—

I 'm *so* glad to see you. I understand you 're to be congratulated on the engagement of your daughter. You must be so glad to get her settled—at last! It 's lovely, is n't it? Why, Miss Knowlton, how do you do? Have n't seen you for ages. Have you quite forsaken frivolity? [*Deep concern.*] In mourning—your father? Oh, I beg your pardon, I did n't know—or at least—I—I think I must have forgotten. . . . The flowers I sent? Oh, I 'm so glad you liked them. [*Hastily.*] Mrs. Wescott, this is Miss Knowlton. How do you do? Great pleasure, I 'm sure. [*Passes her along.*] A moment's breathing space, Mrs. Wescott. Did n't I tell you they 'd all come at once? Here 's that strange and wonderful Mrs. Starr—I always want to say to her:

> **Twinkle, twinkle, little star—**
> **How I wonder what you are!**

[*Quick change to delight.*] Why, Mrs. Starr—how do you do? So glad to see you. I was broken-hearted that I missed your talk at Mrs. Martin's on " The Analytic Study of Ragtime." [*Surprised tone.*] You did n't? Oh, how *stupid* of me—I 've confused you

with Mrs. Bangor. Your subject is "Cooking in the Eighteenth Century," is n't it? You know Mrs. Wescott? [*To Mrs. W.*] My dear, did you hear what I said to her? She and Mrs. Bangor are sworn enemies! Here comes Miss Waight. I 've always thought her parents must have had a prophetic sense of humor when they named her Carrie Waight. Is n't she a whale! How do you do, Miss Waight—so glad to see you. My dear girl, what have you done to yourself? No—but you look so thin! You *do* like to be told that—I don't see why you should—why—no—you 're not fat! You know Mrs. Wescott? . . . . Mrs. Right, this *is* a pleasure. And how is that dear husband of yours? Oh, I—I beg your pardon—I—Mrs. Wescott—Mrs. Right. [*To Mrs. W.*] Well, did you hear that? I asked her how her husband was, and she said she really did n't know—she believed he was in Europe! I tell you it is n't safe to ask the simplest question of your dearest friend these days! Here comes Mrs. Easton—prepare for an avalanche!

[*Her face assumes the gone look of one deluged with talk. She makes ineffectual efforts to break in.*]

HER DAY AT HOME

Oh, how do you do, Mrs. Easton? So—indeed? Oh, I 'm so glad—No? I should never have expected it—Really? How dreadful! I *am* so sorry—Oh, well, that 's better. . . . You know Mrs. . . . [*To Mrs. W.*] Whew! have you ever been able to get in a word edgewise? I never have. Wonder if she ever runs down? My dear—I think they 're all here. Let 's plunge boldly in, and see if we can get a cup of tea for love or money. Come along!

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THE ROAD OF THE LOVING HEART

SCENE—*Drawing-room at* MRS. DERWENT'S.

Enter MRS. DERWENT *and* ALEXANDER WALTON.

MRS. DERWENT

HOME again—home! I think I must be an abnormal sort of creature—for sometimes I hate home! The same old things crowding you in, shutting out the sunshine, and looking at you with the same old eyes! That squat bronze idol is always laughing at me. I 'd like to have a bonfire every week and burn up all my things. Hard on the insurance companies—[*Laughs.*] I had n't thought of that. Well—things are always hard on somebody.

[*She sinks down on couch and plays with her gloves.*]

Tragic—you say? Oh, no—not tragic—only tired.

[*She makes an effort and continues brightly.*]

How did you time your entrance so opportunely? A moment later, or a moment earlier—and you would have missed me. Your guardian spirit—she 's still faithful, then? I suppose it is a " she " ?

Where? The Kimbals? Oh, yes—I went. What—you were there, and just to see me? You must have come after I had gone. I hurried on to a reception somewhere—I 've forgotten just where, took in two teas—and now—home again, for an hour before the night work begins. Why do I do it? Well—it seems to keep me from thinking. Chatter—chatter—chatter—automatic, you see. I 'd hate to hear a phonographic report of the things I say on a day like to-day.

Yes, dear, I *am* tired. I only seem to find rest when your arms are around me—and yet, sometimes I think, Alex, that our meeting was the greatest misfortune that could have come to us. Please, dear, let me finish. If I 'd been born of your class . . . no, no, you can't change facts, Alex; I was not—am

not of your class. Then, there 's the past—[*Passionately*]—if one could kill and crush and forget the past—but one cannot.

[*She walks to and fro.*]

Your friends ask me about, and treat me politely—but why—because I am myself?—Not at all—because the great Alexander Walton has told the world that he intends to make me his wife. You 've lifted me up, so far, Alex. [*Quickly.*] Ah, dear—I did n't mean to hurt you. . . . Come, we won't talk of me any more—what has to-day brought you, my Alex?

[*Crosses to his chair and leans above him.*]

What—really? More honors? Ah—Alex, you 're climbing so high, and I 'm away down here, trying to see up to you. Yes, I *am* jealous—jealous of your fame—jealous of your honors, because they are taking you away from me. You have so much, love, and I have only you! "With all you have, you can't make one woman happy?" Well, I suppose there are people born whose fate it is to see, to almost touch happiness, and yet never to reach it. You 've given me all the joy I 've ever had—but to have made

me happy—you would have had to begin so far back—with my mother, perhaps.

No—no—not that to-night—don't let us go over all that again to-night. It can't be yet—I cannot marry you while you 're in this fever of work—I 'd only distract and bother you. Not until you have time for me—well—perhaps that 's not a pretty way to put it—I mean that you can't serve two mistresses. After we 're married? Well—I suppose your wife and your work will have to compromise. When she rules, I 'll slip away very quietly, and hide—but when I reign, I want her buried! [*Clock strikes.*]

Dear me! so late! I fear, Sir Alex, I must send you away. I 've only a moment left in which to dress, and I dine out. I 'm so sorry —yes, I know I 'm unsatisfactory—but dinner waits for no man. . . . Good-night, my love. [*She watches him out, and comes slowly back to couch.*]

I suppose it 's got to come! There is no use running away from thoughts. You can't shut out the in-betweens, when the thoughts come crowding in. . . . What am I going to do? What *am* I going to do? Am I going to marry Alex, and be happy—

at last? [*Harshly.*] Well—why not? Life owes me a little happiness—God knows I 've had none. [*Softly.*] And I can make *him* happy—I know I can! I 'm playing with chances again—for there 's always the past. Wherever I look—up or down—it 's there! These women about me, with their good, untempted lives behind them, they thrust it at me—their suavest bows an insult! I suppose they call me—what is it?—" a woman with a past." Alex's wife—a woman with a— And he, poor boy—the only one who knows the story—he will have none of my warnings. He thinks he can march on up, and carry me with him, my brave Alex. Well—he can't! I and my past—we 'll get in his way, and he 'll stumble on us. Then after a while he 'll wonder why he—No—no—Alex's happiness—his success—I must not—I will not tamper with them. In the old days, before I learned to think, I might have taken the chances. But I did n't love Alex then—[*Smiles*]—it must have been before I was born! I 've grown too big with love to drop back again.

[*Half rises from the couch.*]

Alex—you must go on alone, climbing

to your heights. I, with my burden, can't keep step, and so I must fall out. Ah, Alex, Alex, if you knew what it means to me—the long, lonely road without you! But I choose it—I choose it, for your sake, my Alex. . . . The little bronze god and I—we must go on—laughing!

[*Turns, half dazed, as if interrupted.*]

What is it—Marie—what is it? Ah—yes I had forgotten that I dine out!

[*Gets up slowly, as if numb, and drags herself out.*]

WHAT THE JANITOR HEARD

SCENE—*Public telephone-room, basement of the "Montclaire."*
Discovered—MRS. MARTIN, *waiting for her number.*
Enter MRS. NORTHRUP, *hastily.*

MRS. NORTHRUP

GOOD MORNING, Mrs. Martin! You waiting to use the phone? Yes, is n't it a godsend? I could n't live without it! I 'm in such a muddle—two unexpected guests to lunch—and Monday, and not a thing in the house to eat. I excused myself to go to the baby, and ran down here. Have you got two nickels for this dime? Thank you so much.

[*Takes down receiver while talking.*]

It 's such a nuisance not to have nickels

—Hello—is this the grocery? Oh, excuse me, Central—I forgot to look it up.

[*Hangs up receiver and gets down book.*]

Now was n't that bright? I never can remember numbers, can you?

[*Takes down receiver.*]

Hello—South 4032, please. Yes—4032. [*To Mrs. M.*] They 're always so stupid when you 're in a hurry. Hello—is this Brown's? I want to speak to Fred. Hello —is this Fred? This is Mrs. Northrup. I have unexpected guests to lunch, Fred, and I want you to send me some things at once. Well—I don't know, what have you got? How much are fresh mushrooms? How much—goodness!—send me canned. And —can of peas. How much are new potatoes? *No*—that 's simply outrageous! No, I don't want them at that price. [*To Mrs. M.*] Potatoes always seem ordinary to me, don't they to you? Even if you *do* pay sixty-five cents for two or three. No—I 'm not talking to you, Fred. I want two boxes of strawberries. I don't care how much they are. [*To Mrs. M.*] They always make an impression this time of year, don't you think so? No, I 'm not talking to you, Fred. Six

ripe tomatoes—pick me out nice ones, now. And, Fred, have the butcher send me eight lamb chops—extra nice. No—not to-day. I think that 's all. [*Hangs up the receiver.*] I wonder if I 've forgotten anything. Oh, dear—the salad! [*Jerks down receiver.*]

Hello — Fred — No, Central, I want Brown's again. I did put a nickel in. Another one? Why, it 's perfectly outrageous —I shall certainly complain to the manager. No—I want—[*To Mrs. M.*]—Dear me—what was that number? Oh, yes, South 4032—thanks! Hello—Fred—I want—well, call Fred to the phone, please, quickly. I forgot to order a head of lettuce, Fred. No, that 's all, I think.

[*Hangs up receiver.*]

I hope you 'll get your number, now, Mrs. Martin.

[*Starts to go out, then returns quickly.*]

Oh, would you mind waiting just a moment longer? I forgot the butter, and we have n't a bit. So sorry to interrupt you—in a hurry too, are you? How kind you are!

[*Takes receiver down.*]

Hello—South 4032, please, quickly. *Another* nickel? Well, I 'm still talking to

Brown's grocery. Well, I never heard of such a thing! Mrs. Martin—have you got another nickel? Thank you so much. Here it is, Central. Hello—Brown's? I want Fred. Hello—Fred—a jar of butter, please, with my order. No, this is Mrs. Northrup. My things have gone? Well, I 'll give a boy a quarter to bring it over at once.

[*Hangs up receiver and turns to Mrs. M.*]

Thank you, *so much.* What? I 've taken all your nickels? Oh, what a shame—and I have n't a cent of change. Well, perhaps you could borrow it from the janitor. I 'm so sorry! [*Looks after Mrs. M.*]

The idea of being so mean about five cents! I never did like the woman, anyway!

II

Enter MR. REYNOLDS. [*Determination writ large in every feature. Takes down the receiver, scowling.*]

HELLO—give me Harrison 1000. No—1000. Well, well, ten double nought, if you

must. I don't care what you call it, if you give me the number. Hello—is this Harrison 1000? Well, ring off—I don't want you. Hello—Central—what 's the matter with you people? I want ten double nought Harrison sometime before to-night. Hello—this is Reynolds. Yes, Reynolds, 225 Lafayette Avenue, top flat. Now I 've written you and telephoned you as often as I intend to, about the steam heat in my flat. I 've got a sick wife and small children, and I don't mean to have them freezing to death all the time. The thermometer has n't registered above sixty for a week, and the janitor says he can't help it. Now, I 've put up with your damned shilly-shallying long enough—and either you get a man up here to-day to fix the pipes, or I 'll get out next week! What 's that? *What?* Not Smith? Who are you? Mme. Marion's Millinery—why the deuce did n't you say so? Ring off.

[*Rings up Central vigorously.*]

Hello—Central—you have now given me three wrong numbers. Will you try once more? [*Sweetly.*] Harrison ten double nought. Yes—thank you. Is this Smith's? Who is this? Well, I want to

speak to Smith. Where? Milwaukee for two weeks? Ring off!

[*Hangs up receiver, with a woeful smile, which ends in a word we can't repeat.*]

III

Enter Mrs. Baldwin *and* Bobby, *her son.*

Bobby *speaks*

Oh, no—mamma, I want to ring him up. Yes, I can. Why can't I? Well, when you 've ringed him up, then can I talk to him. Why? Why do I have to be still? Now, can I? Now?

[*He puts his mouth to the receiver, then, as if in obedience to mother's correction, puts it to his ear.*]

Hello—papa. Bet you don't know who this am. No, 't'aint. [*To mother.*] He finks it 's you. No—'t'aint Mary—it 's me. Yes, I do hear you—it 's awful buzzy, though, in your ear, ain't it? I 've been to the lake. Yep, an' made boats. Me an' little

Evans. No—little Evans—l-i-t-t-l-e Evans. No, he has n't got any front name—jus' little Evans. My boat sankted. No-o, sankted in the water. [*To mother.*] No, I don't mean that; I mean sankted, mamma. Mamma interrupted me. Little Evans was awful bad. No, I was n't—jus' little Evans. He mos' pushed me right in the water. He was ist usgustus! No-o, I said usgustus. No, I don't, mamma. Mamma's talkin' to me again. I have to get down now, 'cause I 'm so heavy, mamma says.

[*Kisses him through the telephone.*]

Did you get that? Good-by, Pops. Come home soon.

IV

Enter HULDA, *of unmistakably Swedish features.*

She drawls

HUL-LO! Ya-as, de dochter leef here. Huh? No—he ees gone owut. Ya-as, I tank he coomin' back to launch. I don' know. Vat ees de name? Mrs. Vat? Hut-

tle? No—I don' catch heem. Mrs. Huttle —vat? Oh, ya-as, Huddle—vat? Hamer— no-o, Homer—Oh, ya-as, I got heem—Mrs. Huddleheimer. Vere you been livin'? No-o —de nomber. Four hunert und t'irteen? No-o, ain't dat heem? Oh, ya-as, I got heem. Four hunert und t'irty-t'ree, Fourteen' Street. No-o? Oh, ya-as—Fourtieth Street. Ya-as, I got heem right now. Vat ees de matter of you? No—vat seeknesses you got? Oh, eet ees your leetle gurl, huh? Dip—no, I don't hear you. Dip—vat? I don' know dat vord. You better call de dochter up ven he coom in. No—I don' *know* ven he will be in. Sometimes he vill be home before night, an' sometimes no-ot. I don' know. Ya-as, I tell heem.

[*Hangs up receiver.*]

De stoopey ol' t'ing!—she can' talk de English good!

IN THE MERRY MONTH OF MAY

SCENE—*On the street.*
MRS. MARSHALL *meets a friend.*

MRS. MARSHALL

GOOD MORNING, Mrs. Owen. Yes, it *is* a lovely morning, is n't it? To tell you the truth, I had n't noticed it before, but you see I 'm in a state which precludes all attention to details like weather! Oh, my dear—it 's worse than that—it 's house-hunting! No, of course you did n't, because we only decided to move yesterday. I went to see our landlord about repairs, and I got so perfectly furious at him, that I gave up our house on the spot. I do hate these people who are always moving, but I tell you they 're the only ones who get things done for them—it 's the old tenants who get no

consideration—nor repairs! As I said to Dick this morning, we've outgrown the house anyway, and we certainly can't do worse! Just think of the houses that have everything built in—why, we don't know the meaning of modern improvements, and certainly our present landlord will never instruct us. . . . Of course, Dick's awfully cross about it—men are such unprogressive creatures. Well—I must hurry along to that Intelligence Office, or whatever you call it. Thanks—I feel quite sure that I won't have any trouble. You see, I've found out in the old house all the things that I do *not* want! Good-by, my dear.

II

SCENE—*Real Estate Office.*
MRS. MARSHALL *enters briskly. Date—April 28th.*

MRS. MARSHALL

[*Cheerfully and decisively.*] Good morning. I want to get a list of desirable houses

to rent. I want to tell you exactly what I want, so that I will not have to waste any time looking at impossibilities. I want a twelve-room house, with steam heat, three bath-rooms, bookcases, sideboard, and ice-box built in. I want a house which gets the sun in all its windows, and I 'd like one with some ground about it. I prefer it on a boulevard, and in a good neighborhood, of course. Oh, yes, I want it in a block where there are few children, and I want a stable. I do not wish to pay more than eighty dollars a month rent. You understand just what I want, do you? Several that would suit me—you say? Well, give me the list, please. As many as that—one—two—three—four—why—fifteen houses! There must be a great number vacant this year. Going into apartments, you say? Well, I cannot understand how any self-respecting human being could live in one of those apartment buildings, just like cliff-dwellers! I 'll go and look at these houses this morning. Much obliged to you. Yes, it *is* hot!

SCENE—*Real Estate Office.*
Five o'clock of the same day. MRS. MARSHALL *enters.*

MRS. MARSHALL

[*With bubbling indignation.*] I wish to see the young man who gave me this list of houses. Not here? Well, do you expect him back to-night? Yes, it is important. I should like to ask him what he means by giving me such a list of impossibilities. Does he think that I have nothing to do but run around and look at such—such atrocities? Here, I 've been this whole day in the broiling sun, and I have n't seen a house I 'd even consider! Now, I told him exactly what I wanted. It is n't as if I were one of those women who has no idea of what she wants. I know precisely, and I told him in plain English, and he said he could suit me perfectly. Do you mean to say that you consider these your best houses? Why, one of them actually had a tin-lined bath-tub! A big lawn? Well, what of that—you can't bathe on the lawn! Other houses?—but do

you realize that this is the 28th of April, and I have to move the first of May? I suppose I 'll *have* to come back in the morning—and I wish you would wait on me, please. I don't want anything more to do with that other young person. Owns the business, does he? Well, he ought n't to—he 's utterly incompetent! Good afternoon.

SCENE—*Real Estate Office.*
MRS. MARSHALL *enters. Date—April 29th.*

MRS. MARSHALL

[*Do-or-die tone.*] Good morning. What have you for me this morning? This is a new list? Now, will you please tell me just what to expect. Sunlight—but no yard. Go on—steam heat, nice neighborhood—but only one bath—grounds, but nothing built in. Never mind about the rest—I 'll go look at them. Better luck?—well, I hope so!

Same day—5 P.M.
MRS. MARSHALL *enters.*

MRS. MARSHALL

[*Tragic.*] Yes, I 've been to them all! I 've been through thirty-two houses in two days. Why people continue to build such ugly, inconvenient, unsatisfactory things, I cannot see. You have nothing more to suggest? You think I 've seen the best of them? Very well—good evening.

SCENE—*Real Estate Office. Date—April 30.*
MRS. MARSHALL *enters.*

MRS. MARSHALL

[*With absolute humility.*] Good morning. What have you in—in a modern up-to-date apartment? Yes, I did say that, but we 've got to go somewhere, and we 've got to move to-morrow. Size? Anything from twelve rooms down to four. Rent? I don't care. My requirements? I have n't any. I 'll look at anything you think desirable. I

must n't expect—*what?* To have the janitor built in! I consider that impertinent—sir! This is the list of your best flats? Very well—good morning.

Same day—Noon.
MRS. MARSHALL *enters.*

MRS. MARSHALL

[*Despair.*] I 've seen them all. I liked two, but they would n't rent to me, because I had children and a parrot. We might give up the parrot, you know, but I can hardly be expected to part with my children!

SCENE—*On the street. Date—May 1st.*
MRS. MARSHALL *meets a friend.*

MRS. MARSHALL

[*Beamingly.*] How do you do, Mrs. Owen! Was I smiling? Well—I 'm the happiest woman on earth—do you know we 're not going to move, after all? I canvassed the

ground pretty thoroughly, and decided that Dick was right for once—that it 's better

> to bear those ills we have
> Than fly to others that we know not of.

So I induced poor old Dick to go to the landlord and say that I was a little hasty in my decision, and that we had decided to stay. It cost Dick fifty dollars to buy off the new tenant, but then, as I told him, it would have cost us more to move! I find I 'm really quite attached to the old place—its faults endear it to me. And then, you know—I do so hate those people who " fold their tents like the Arabs and silently steal away " each year. Yes, do come and see me in my old—new house. Good-by.

SUBURBANITES

SCENE—*Suburban train.*
Enter a very young person, who meets a friend.

THE VERY YOUNG PERSON

WHY, Betty Bardon, how do you do? Where on earth did you come from? I have n't seen you in ages. Is that so—boarding-school? Is n't that fine? Of course, you liked it? Everybody always likes boarding-school? Me? Oh, I 'm still at Miss Smithers'—I suppose I always shall be there. Like it? I should say not—I simply hate it. Why, that old woman, that Miss Smithers—she just spends her whole time making us girls miserable. I give you my word of honor that if a boy so much as puts his head around the corner of the street, she pulls down all the curtains. That 's a fact. Oh, I 'd just love to—but my father won't

hear of it. He says he wants me right at home, where he can see that my studies don't interfere with my social duties. He—he—he!—silly, is n't it? He says he knows that if I went away to school—I 'd work myself into brain fever! I never saw you look so well, and that 's the sweetest hat you 've got on. Would you mind turning around? Oh, it 's lovely. Where do you get your hats? Do you, now? Why, I never was in there. I 'll just make mamma go in with me to-morrow. Hats are an awful bother, don't you think so? Of course, I never can have the kind I want; I always have to get these young-looking things—mamma makes me —but I tell you *one* thing—my spring suit is 'way down to the ground. Um-hum, I 've driven mamma to it at last. Why, it 's perfectly disgraceful. There are plenty of girls in our school who have their clothes clear down to the ground when they 're only thirteen years old, and here I am, almost sixteen, and mine up to my ankles. [*Gasps.*] Oh, there he is!

[*Giggles, and claps hand over her mouth.*]

Oh, fudge—I did n't mean to say that out

loud! That's just the trouble—I don't know who he is. I only know that he gets on my train in the morning, and he takes this train every afternoon. Oh, no—not that thing—I mean the third one, with the pink cheeks and the curly hair. Is n't he a stunner?

[*Seizes friend by wrist, excitedly.*]

You don't mean to say that you know him? Well, call him over and introduce him —I 'm just dying to meet him! Oh, well— never mind, you can explain when we get him here—Oh, go on—p-l-e-a-s-e! Wait till he looks this way—now—he 's looking. [*Sighs.*] He saw us—he 's coming. Is n't he swell? [*Nods and giggles.*]

How d' you do? [*Giggle.*] Yes, I 've seen you before, too! Yes, I always take this train. Yes [*Giggle*], I know you do—I 've seen you on it! Is n't it funny we never have met before? I know lots of Manual Training boys. Oh, yes, I know him, and Fred, and Dick Vaughan, I should say. I know all those fellows—awfully nice crowd, don't you think so? Sort of young, but awfully nice! What, Dick Vaughan—mercy! no— he 's just a baby—why, I 've known him

since he was that high—and he 's only about thirteen—Oh, he goes with lots of older fellows and all that, but—

[*Looks at conductor, who interrupts her.*]

What? Oh, ticket—now what did I do with my ticket? Did you notice whether I had a pocket-book or not, Betty? Did n't I? Well, maybe it 's in my book.

[*Shakes book.*]

No—well—you 'll have to punch my ticket twice to-morrow, conductor. [*To boy.*] Oh, now—please don't—thank you! I do have the awfullest time with my ticket. Of course, if I take my pocket-book, it 's all right, because, then it 's in my pocket-book, but if I don't, I usually put it in one of my school-books, and then if I don't bring the same book home that I took to school, why, there I am! Why, sometimes I owe the conductor as much as five punches! Dear me! this is my station! Where *did* I put my other book? Would you mind moving, Betty? No—it is n't there. Oh, thank you. Did n't I have an umbrella? I thought I did. [*Calls.*] I 'm getting off here, conductor. *Do* come and see me while you 're

home. [*To boy.*] I—I [*Giggle*] I suppose I 'll see you in the morning. Good-by.

II

Enter MOTHER *and small boy,* MARTIMAS

MOTHER

Now hurry along, Martimas, hurry!
[*Lifts him into seat.*]
Now, you sit still and be a little gentleman. [*She looks about car, and back to Martimas.*]
Yes, we are going now. Yes, the engine is pulling us. What makes the engine go? Why—why—the engineer, dearie. Um-hum—the engineer. Turn around, Martimas, and let mamma tie your necktie. Now hold still. [*She untics and ties his tie again.*]
Nonsense! Now, I did n't pull it tight enough to hurt you. Scratch—what—your collar? Where—here? Oh, that does n't scratch much. I can't help it if it does—you have to wear a collar when you go to town. Because you do. Gentlemen always wear collars. I don't know why. Yes, that 's the

lake. Um-hum—it 's very deep. No—not a million miles, but deep—quite deep. [*Indignantly.*] Martimas—take your feet off my dress. Look at that, now.

[*Brushes herself vigorously.*]

Turn around and let me put your cap on straight. I never saw anything like the way you wear your cap. Now, let it alone. I don't care how the boys wear theirs—I want you to wear yours the way I put it on you. [*Sharply.*] Martimas—don't do that again—have n't you a handkerchief? Well—what have you two for? [*Laughs.*] One for each nose? Well, you 'd better use them both. That 's right, now put them back in your pocket. No, no—one in each pocket, silly. [*Looks out the window.*]

No—this does n't seem to be a station. I suppose we 're slowing up to—to let off—smoke, or something or other. No, now—this window is just as good as that. . . . . Well—my dear, if that is the only thing that will give you happiness—go over there. But be careful. [*She helps him across.*]

Martimas—oh, Martimas—come here to mamma—come here a moment. Put up your foot—I want to tuck your shoe strings in. I never saw such floppy things. Now,

you may go back. Careful—ah—I knew you 'd do that. Sh-sh—come here to me. Stop that noise—I never heard such yelling. Come here!

[*Takes him in her arms, and rocks to and fro.*]

There—there—where did um hurt um? Mamma kiss it—there—there. Look at that little baby staring at you—ain't you 'shamed? Now, you turn round here at your own window. Yes—yes, I see—it 's a freight-car. I don't know what 's in it—I expect coal—or cows. Oh, is n't it a coal-car? Well—it must be something else, then. Yes, that 's steam—Martimas, you do ask such silly questions! I don't know anything about steam or cars or cows or coal! You ask papa when he comes home. He 'll know. . . . Now, what are you going to do. Do sit still like a gentleman. What? Oh—the baby. Is n't it cute?

[*Wiggles hand at baby across the aisle, in the usual asinine manner for attracting a baby's attention.*]

How do—baby—how do! [*To* M.] Is n't that cunning? Did you see that smile? What—you want to kiss that baby? Well, I don't know whether its mamma will let

you or not. You might go and ask her. But do be careful now. We don't want you falling down again.

[*Helps him across, then claps her hands and calls him back.*]

Why, Martimas, what do you mean by grabbing that little baby by the top of the head? Of course it 's soft there—all babies are like that. Well, because they are—I don't know why. No, your head is n't, because you 're not a baby. No, mine is n't, because I 'm grown up. Papa's?—well—I sometimes think that papa's is a little soft yet. This is our station. Now, don't stop to ask questions. Come along.

[*Drags him off, finally picks him up, and runs off.*]

III

Enter an up-to-date girl. She is joined by Mr. Atwood

She speaks

Good morning, Mr. Atwood. Won't you join me? And how do you fare this perfect

day? Yes, it certainly is charming. You know, I think weather is the only thing I 'm conservative about—I 'm all for extremes in everything else. You think so? Women are more apt to be extremists than men—you say? Well—perhaps, I never thought of it. Of course, you men are so overburdened with logic, reason, and all such drawbacks. Now we women just jump at our conclusions and sense the in-betweens, while you poor plodders are conscientiously exploring! No—no—I disagree with you—I think nine times out of ten we arrive at the same conclusions, and you must admit—our method is shorter.

[*Leans over and bows to woman who passes.*]

Why, how do you do, Mrs. Stearns? I did n't see you. Thank you—I am hoping to, soon. [*To* Mr. A.] Has she been sitting there all the time? How stupid of me not to have seen her! Do I like her? Yes, immensely. She 's so frankly detestable. Most women are, you know—but not frankly. She says more nasty things in a minute than you can repeat in an hour, and yet she never seems to have any malice. A

keen eye for human failings, and a sharp tongue for summing them up—and it 's all done in the sort of impersonal attitude of the historian, don't you know. Oh, she 's clever. No, no—men don't like her—she 's too smart. Well, that 's what I mean. I don't think men *do* like clever women. They like them in books, but they 're afraid of them in the flesh.

Oh, well, *of course* women like clever men—but, then, women like men to be their equals—and you men—you like a woman to be—on the *next lower* mental plane! Did that man call Elmswood? I 'm off at the next station. Yes, I 'm going to the club to play golf. I go round every day now with a professional. Getting ready for the tournament, you know. We take our games so seriously these days, don't you think we do? I always seem to be getting ready for a match, or getting over a match, and it 's a maximum of hard work and a minimum of pleasure, and of course I would n't do it if I were n't such an odious old peacock, thirsting for success at things! Well, here we are! I 'm glad to have seen you. Thanks, I 'll work very hard, and pray for luck. What more can mortal do?

IV

Enter MAGGIE DOOGAN *and* ANNIE O'BRIEN

MAGGIE

Now, hurry roight alang, Annie O'Brien, an' take the furst seat ye come to. Here ye are! [*Drops into seat and gets up again quickly.*]

I beg your pardon, sor! I did n't see ye git down furst. I hope oi did n't hu-urt ye, sor? Well, that 's good. [*Aside.*] I 'most squashed 'im. Here ye are now, Annie—sit down. I don't want to sit down—I would n't sit down if I could—I 'd rather sit down standin' oop! I 'll grab onto one of these hoops! [*She steadies herself by loop.*]

Ut 's awful crowded this toime a night—ain't ut—Annie? Sure t'ing. Yis—I bin out all day—ut 's my day out. I bought me a oolster, Annie, silk lined and fancy trimmed—ah—ut was a swill t'ing. Eight dollars and t'irty-eight cints—would ye belave ut? Oh—ut 's a swill t'ing! No—ain't so tired—I would n't be tired at all if ut was n't that I 'm wearin' the mistress's ould boots, an'

they nearly kill me fate!—An' where 're ye livin' now, Annie? Are ye? An' d' ye loike the place? [*Utter surprise and horror.*]

Ye don't tell me? She won't let you play the coronet? Why, what d' ye shtay for, Annie? I would n't shtay a minute with a woman that would not let me play the coronet! Why don't you bring 'er up before the Union? Ah, yis—I got a noice place—'mos' suits me! But I sez to her before I wint there—I sez, "Now, I want one hour on the mornin' to practise music, and one hour after lunch to take me nap. The butler 's got to be Irish, so 's we 'll be conjaynial, an'," I sez, "if I want a few frinds in now an' thin for dinner, I don't want no kick coomin', see?" An' she sez to me—she sez, "Would ye moind if me an' the family just stopped in the house while ye 're with us?" An' I sez, "I don't moind at all—at all," I sez. "But if ye promise me these things an' don't do um," I sez, "I 'll have ye up before the Union, an' ye 'll sit in the kitchen an' whistle for a cook," I sez. An' she knows I wuz tellin' her the truth. I had her coomin' all roight—all roight. She 's meek as a lamb, Annie—she never peeps! I tell ye all

ye got to do is to make up yer moind to yer roights an' larn to handle the upper classes, an' ut 's aisy—ut 's aisy! By Gar—this is my station. Come round an' see me, Annie—come round an' see me an' the butler. So long—Annie—so long!

THEIR LAST RIDE TOGETHER

SCENE—*Country road, with village in the distance.*
Discovered—A man and a woman in an automobile.

She speaks

OH, it is ideal—the softest air, and the bluest sky—and the yellowest fields! Well, but you *would* see them, if you 'd just look at them! I feel like flying on a day like this, and this dear old machine is almost as good as wings! God bless the man who invented automobiles. [*She leans out, and laughs softly.*]

Oh, see—stop a minute—slow up. See him—the yellow lizard on the rock? [*To lizard.*] How do you do, sir? [*Laughs.*] See him wriggle—that 's the way he bows. I see it now—I see it all—that 's what I was—last incarnation. A beautiful, yellow-

green lizard, with nothing on earth to do all day long but sun myself on a warm rock. No brain—no thoughts—no responsibilities —just food and sleep. Idyllic! You don't like my lizard idea, I take it? [*Sighs.*] You 're such an unappreciative creature. Do I do you an injustice? Well, I 'll amend it and say—your appreciative powers are strictly limited. [*Hums softly.*]

"Alas! that Spring should vanish with the Rose—"

[*Breaks off with deep sigh, in answer to his remark.*]

Oh, dear me! now there you go. Art, literature, science, trees, lizards—all roads, with you, lead back to—love! Why—why will you always hark back to that tabooed subject? [*Crossly.*] I have no patience with a man who has but one idea, and presents it to you every time he opens his mouth! What sort of man *do* I like? W-e-l-l, I can't tell you exactly—I can't give you a list of required virtues, any more than I can tell you just how to make fudges —but I can make them. I sort of—*feel*

what ought to go in. Oh, you *are* incorrigible. You harry an idea to the very topmost branches—I—I—Oh, I don't know. It 's such a silly conversation! [*Desperately.*] I just wish I 'd been one of those Sabine women—snatched up and carried off willy-nilly, with no time to weigh this man with that—and choose. I 'd *love* being carried off and conquered in spite of myself. Then I could fight until the last flag went down, and live peacefully ever after.

[*Turns to look at him quickly, then laughs.*]

You? How could you? Would you kidnap me in the dark, and carry me off in a hansom cab? How would you go about it? Alas—and alack—we have to go to "Richard Carvel" and "To Have and to Hold" for our romance in these lack-luster days! [*Hums again lightly.*]

"The nightingale that in the branches sang—
Ah, whence and whither flown again who knows?"

[*Looks at man, then at machine, then up the road toward the town they are approaching.*]

What are you doing? [*Seriously.*] What *are* you doing? Don't you see we 're coming to a town? Well, slow up—we 're going at a dreadful rate. [*Anxiously.*] What is it? Is there anything the matter with the thing? [*Excitedly.*] Why *don't* you do something! Oh—oh—*is* it running away?

[*Turns to him in utter amazement and annoyance.*]

Marry you? Certainly not! I think you 'd better give *your* entire attention to the machine and let matrimony alone.

[*The girl begins to look terrified.*]

We 're going faster and faster. We 'll be killed if we go through that town at this rate! Well, *I* don't want to be killed with *you* or anybody else! Oh, see—there 's somebody on the road!

[*She half rises and calls.*]

Look out—oh, man—look out—we can't stop this thing! [*Turns to man beside her.*]

I command you to stop! If you can't, I 'm going to jump. Don't *touch* me! Oh, heavens, we 're in the town now.

[*She looks about her, as if they were going at high speed.*]

[*Calls.*] Look out, little boy—do you want to get run over—

[*Hangs out of auto and calls back to him the rest of her sentence.*]

—you silly little idiot!

[*To man beside her.*]

Just look at the crowd after us. Oh—I hate you! And a policeman—

[*She starts up suddenly, her eyes wide with terror, and points straight ahead.*]

Look—look—we're going toward the river. [*Horror.*] Oh—oh!

[*Turns to him quickly.*]

Marry you—oh, yes, yes—if you could only stop this infernal machine. Any time—now—here—wherever you say—only just stop it. Yes, I love you, with all my heart and soul—but if you don't hurry up, I won't love you long!

[*As auto begins to slow up she sits with her hands over her eyes, catching her breath painfully. The machine stops with a jerk, and she looks up, turns to man, and breaks out angrily.*]

Do you mean to say that you could have stopped it as easily as that at *any* time?

[*Looks ahead.*]

And—and there is a bridge. You *knew* there was a bridge! [*Rises.*]

Going? I 'm going home by the train. I don't care what you think, I 'm going on the train. [*She jumps out.*]

[*Superbly.*] I certainly do not consider myself engaged to you—you wrung my consent from me under false pretenses. I beg your pardon, I did not say that at all—I said that if I *had* been one of those Sabine women, no doubt I 'd have liked being carried off. Of course, having no sense of humor, you misunderstood me. I bid you a very good afternoon—a very good afternoon.

WHEN SHADES ASSEMBLE

SCENE—*The After-World.*
Enter LADY MACBETH *and* PORTIA.

LADY MACBETH

GOOD-MORROW, Lady Portia, Cato's
daughter,
Wife of that Brutus who did slay great
Cæsar—
Why stalk you here among the shades alone?

PORTIA

Such words as slayer sound but ill, me-
thinks,
Upon the lips of guilty Cawdor's wife.
My Brutus was a martyr, who did read
Signs of the times, which others dared not
see—

The blood he shed, was shed in duty's name!
So say not slayer's wife again to me,
Thou who didst lure beneath thy roof
King Duncan, and with thy two blood-
stained hands
Didst, with thy husband's aid and foul con-
nivance,
Kill, stab, and murder there thy king!

LADY MACBETH [*hastily*]

Enough—enough, fair Portia, this
sufficeth—
Our husbands may have had their little
faults,
No doubt we had our little vices too.
But here among the shades, where friends
are few,
Let us not waste the hours in angry speech,
But join our forces, that we may not be
Dependent for all social intercourse
Upon Ophelia and that youngster Juliet!

PORTIA

Who even now approach from out the dusk!

Enter JULIET *and* OPHELIA

JULIET

Dear me, Ophelia, but this life is slow!
Why, when I lived at fair Verona's court,
My every day was filled with gracious sport!
Can I forget that ball my father gave,
When first I set my eyes on Romeo!

LADY MACBETH [*aside*]

Methinks that we have heard *that* tale
before!

OPHELIA [*softly*]

Beware—there 's Cawdor's dame, who gossips so.
" Lord, we know what we are—but know
not what we may be!" [*Sings.*]

How should I my true love know—
From another one?
By his cockle hat and staff—
And his sandal shoon!

PORTIA

Ophelia—my dear—know you no other
songs?

OPHELIA

Alas—sweet lady—and alas—alack!

JULIET

Why, at Verona's court the troubadours
Were wont to dedicate their songs to me!

LADY MACBETH

Alas, we can't escape Verona's court!

JULIET [*angrily*]

Dost think we 'd rather hear of Cawdor's
house,
And Duncan's death, and see you wash
your hands,
And hear your thrilly speeches about blood?
Not I—for one—nor mad Ophelia here.
I 'd rather sit and hear Ophelia sing,
And that 's not very cheerful, you 'll admit!

LADY MACBETH [*indignantly*]

Thou impudentest child among the shades—
The raven himself is hoarse that can out-
croak you!

Chastise the valor of thy saucy tongue—
Begone about thy business—get thee hence!

PORTIA [*sweetly*]

Be not impatient with the child, my lady—
She 's young yet, and, poor soul, she died
for love!

JULIET

Yes, and I 'm sorry I was such a fool!
Oh, why did I not wed the Count of Paris,
Instead of joining Romeo in the tomb?

PORTIA

But Romeo loves thee still?

JULIET

Yes. Romeo does! Why, at the time when
all
The heroes are let in to spend the day
With their lost wives and loves, what think
ye then,
This Romeo does?

LADY MACBETH

Well—what doth he?

JULIET

He sits all day and holds Ophelia's hand!

OPHELIA [*softly*]

How shall I *thy* true love know,
From another one?
Tra-la-la-la-la-la-la. . . . . .

JULIET

The Montagues were ever fickle loves.
I care not that he pays Ophelia court,
But this *is* hard, that I must have Lord Hamlet
"Be-ing—or not to be-ing" at my side,
Discoursing on Man's Capability,
And talking ghosts until my very spine
Is chilled and every hair doth rise
"Like quills upon the fretful porcupine!"

LADY MACBETH

How *dare* you use a speech that 's not your
own?

OPHELIA

Oh, I 'm so glad he doth speak thus with
thee—
For I was ever much afeared of him.
He said to get me to a nunnery—
" Oh, woe is me—
To have seen what I have seen—see what
I see!"
He is dead and gone, lady—
He is dead and gone.

JULIET

Methinks Ophelia is a simple thing!

LADY MACBETH [*ruefully*]

I would sometimes I could escape my
Thane,
The days he is allowed to visit me.
I grow aweary of reiteration—
That bickering outworn phrase, " I told
you so."

PORTIA

Children, dear lady, ours the fate has been
For centuries to face the lime-light's glare;
And in the world of mortals still the
young
Do play at Juliet's and Ophelia's parts—
And murder worse than that of Cawdor's
Thane
Is yearly done upon our splendid lines!
Yet, spite of this, we ever do remain
Heroes and heroines of classic lore!
What matter, then, if in this dim beyond
Some private woes and family bickerings
Do mar the tenor of our even ways?
This is the penalty we pay for fame,—
A fame which even elocutionists
Have failed to ruin and entirely mar,—
A fame which, though the idol-shattering
world may try,
It cannot rob us of—it needs us still.
So, ladies, let 's in silence bear
The wounds of private life, and let us turn
A smiling face unto the shades without!

OVER THE COFFEE-CUPS

SCENE—*Breakfast-table.*
Discovered—MRS. MEEK, *waiting breakfast for her better half.*
Enter MR. MEEK, *looking the worse for wear.*

MR. MEEK

'MORNIN'—'Lizabuth. [*Crossly.*] James, why was n't I called for breakfast? Harris thought I wanted to sleep? Well, Harris is n't hired to think—he 's hired to carry out my orders. Hurry up with things—I 've an engagement.

[*Opening and glancing over paper.*]

My dear—I make it a point not to know what time I get in. Four o'clock?—I don't doubt it! It was so thoughtful of you to stay awake and keep track of the time. Soft-boiled eggs—ugh!—take them away—don't you dare put the things in front of me.

Are n't we ever to have anything but eggs for breakfast? I 'd gladly exterminate the whole kingdom of egg-producing animals. Get me a chop, James, and be quick about it.

[*Tries paper again, but puts it down at* MRS. MEEK'S *sigh.*]

Is there anything particular the matter with you this morning, my dear? You certainly would depress a grave-digger. I tell you a man has a right to demand a cheerful face at the breakfast-table. Me? I *am* cheerful. I came down in the best of humors, ready to make myself agreeable, and your first remark put me on edge for the day. Have n't made any remark? Well—it must have been your expression, then—it was something.

[*Looks at paper a minute, then throws it down.*]

Can't you talk a little—or is it against the rules? Oh, mamma is coming, is she? That 'll be nice. When does she arrive? To-day? Sorry I can't be home to dinner. Ring the bell, will you? What is that man doing? James, has the cook gone for the chop? Well—I hope so. Bring me a bromo-seltzer. Ah—is this the chop? [*Tries it.*]

Tough—tough—I can't eat it. No, I don't want it—I don't want anything—I 'll get something down town. Mme. Despair, I leave you to enjoy your miseries. Tell mamma about them; she 'll sympathize, no doubt. Ta-ta! [*Exit.*]

II

SCENE—*Same.*

Discovered—MRS. TENBROOK, *looking squally.*

Enter MR. TENBROOK, *with affable and ingratiating manner.*

MRS. TENBROOK

[*In tone between tears and indignation.*]

GOOD MORNING. Yes, you may bring in the breakfast *now,* Jane. I suppose it 's as cold as a brick. [*To* MR. T.] A good many people told me that matrimony was n't all smooth sailing, and I thought I was prepared for anything—I 'm sure the night before I was married I read a whole book of quotations about marriage not being a path of roses, but I never supposed that, after

only three years, you 'd get in at such an hour as you did last night, and then throw epithets and things at me, when I came in to see if you wanted any breakfast. It 's very strange you thought it was your man, when I came clear into the room and spoke to you. There was a time when you would have known my voice. . . .

[*Silence—then she begins again.*]

I try so hard to be reasonable. It just takes all my self-control not to ask where you went last night—but I won't ask—not at all. Whatever suspicions I may have, I will be silent. Oh, I can be silent if there is any necessity—I 'm not like you, I have *my* tongue under perfect control. . . . I don't see why you can't be amusing at the breakfast-table, when you 've been frisking about all night, goodness knows where, having a good time. What is it Emerson says about a cheerful face at the breakfast-table? No—that is not from my book of quotations. . . .

Such a night! Every board in the house creaked—and there was a mouse somewhere, and such noises outside. Every time I was just dropping off, I thought I heard your latch-key squeak. Bad habit—waiting

up? I suppose it is, but, like some of yours, it 's hard to break. I 'm sure my father never got in at any such hour as you did last night. Well, my mother never had any occasion to "row" at him, as you elegantly express it. Yes, she *was* a model—but bear in mind she had a model husband. I 'm just like mother, though; I 'll do anything on earth to avoid trouble. I can't bear women who nag. My motto is patient endurance. Through? You have n't eaten a thing. I should n't think you would be hungry, after what you probably had last night.

[*Lifts a martyred cheek for his parting kiss.*]

Good-by. [*Watches him out.*] What martyrs—what blessed, silent, unappreciated martyrs we women are!

III

SCENE—*Same.*

Discovered—MR. *and* MRS. KENDAL, *and* ARTHUR KENDAL.

Enter CAROL KENDAL.

CAROL

GOOD MORNIN', motherdie—mornin', dadladdie. What 's the joke? What were you

laughing at? Oh, the Guardian of the Hearth again? What's she done now? Served pudding for breakfast? What—eggs in tea-cups? Oh, lovely! And nothing else? Ah, I see—eggs simply—"a sign of things that are not, and a promise of things hoped for." Well, we have to admit that Time himself is a flier beside *this* cook. Yes, mother dear, she is thorough and good-natured, but even you must grant that breakfast begun at seven and finished at eleven is a strain! . . . Mother, you'd find virtue in —a—a—pumpkin.

What's the news, dad? Wait—let me guess. First column—shootings and hold-ups—(2) somebody declares war—(3) scandal in social circles—(4) article on Trusts. Three out of four right—huh? Laddie—I'm coming to town to-day. I'll do myself the honor of lunching with you—thanks. What — broke — really? Well, never mind—I'll take you! Dad—you're invited—strictly Dutch treat.

[*Hand to ear.*]

Cheer up, friends, I hear a movement in the kitchen. Perchance the coffee is approaching. No—false alarm. Now, don't

let it ruffle you, father. Pin your mind to the virtues mother 's ferreted out—she 's thorough and clean. Cleanliness has always seemed a bit negative to me—but they do say it 's next to godliness. Ah—here we are at last. Let every man fall to. There 's nothing like this period of preparation—trains the temper—induces patience—whets the appetite. There 's the postman's ring —I 'll go. [*Dashes off, and back.*]

Everybody gets a letter. Oh, must you go so soon, dad? Bother the train—you are n't half through your breakfast.

[*Calls after.*]

Dad—mother says, " Wear your ulster." Weather man says, " Colder."

Meet you boys at one o'clock. Good-by.

[*Opens letters, singing.*]

" There were two jolly gentlemen,
Who went away to sea—"

Nice boys, are n't they, mother? Well, dear, if I 'm to take a noon train—to work —to work, says the " little red hen."

FROM LONG AGO TO NOW

THEN

SCENE—MISS ANGELINA'S *Drawing-room.*

Enter REGINALD

REGINALD

MISS ANGELINA, how good you are to see me!

ANGELINA

[*Shyly.*] Am I? No—but I 'm not—for I wanted to see you.

REGINALD

[*Regretfully.*] I—I am so unworthy!

ANGELINA

I don't quite understand . . .

REGINALD

[*Mysteriously.*] No—of course not!

ANGELINA

[*Nervously.*] Will you—will you let me make you a cup of tea?

REGINALD

[*Effusively.*] How heavenly kind you are!

ANGELINA

Strong or weak?

REGINALD

[*Absently.*] Both.

ANGELINA

[*Surprised.*] What?

REGINALD

Oh, I mean—either.

ANGELINA

Sugar?

REGINALD

It needs none—your hands have made it!

ANGELINA

[*Coyly.*] Oh—

REGINALD

[*Bursts out.*] Miss Warring—Angelina —I have something on my mind.

ANGELINA

[*Horrified.*] Have you? Oh, I'm so sorry! Won't you take a caraway cake? I think they are good when you have a—a—

REGINALD

[*Tragically.*] Miss Warring—Angelina —what do you think of love?

ANGELINA

[*Bewildered.*] I—oh—Mr. Reginald—I think some one is calling me.

REGINALD

[*Seizes her arm.*] No—stay, Angelina—don't leave me yet. Let me unburden my mind. What do you think of love?

ANGELINA

[*With bent head.*] Oh, Mr. Reginald—I don't know. I think it must be very pleasant.

REGINALD

Pleasant? Angelina—Love is a fiery furnace that consumes, burns, tortures—kills!

ANGELINA

[*Terrified.*] Oh, no—Mr. Reginald!

REGINALD

I know, Angelina, for I burn—and die!

ANGELINA

What shall I do? Shall I call mother?

REGINALD

Mother? *No!* None can help me save one, and she is so far above me that I dare not aspire to even gaze upon her!

ANGELINA

[*Plucking up courage.*] Is she fair?

REGINALD

[*Rapturously.*] Fair? She is so fair that she dazzles and blinds her slaves!

ANGELINA

Does she know you love her?

REGINALD

Can she be ignorant, when love is writ large in every feature?

ANGELINA

And yet she does n't love you?

REGINALD

Love me? Impossible!

ANGELINA

Then she must be a horrid thing! [*With air of wisdom.*] Men were made to love women, and women were made to love men, and if they pretend they don't—why, they 're —they 're—

REGINALD

I 'm sure of it. If I thought there was hope—

ANGELINA

Why don't you ask her?

REGINALD

I dare not.

ANGELINA

What 's her name? I 'll ask her for you.

REGINALD

You? Angel—her name is Angelina Warring!

ANGELINA

[*Overcome.*] Me? I 'm the angel—Oh, Mr. Reginald—

REGINALD

[*At her feet.*] Ah—I know I am not worthy to sit at your feet, Angelina—but love makes me bold. Could you intrust your life to me—*do you* love me?

ANGELINA

[*Half crying.*] I—I don't know—I—[*Hides her face.*] Oh, dear me—I think I do!

REGINALD

Angelina!—I shall build a shrine for you, my Queen, and worship at your feet all the days of my life!

ANGELINA

I 'm so glad you love me. Did you ever love any one else?

REGINALD

No—Angel! [*Takes her in his arms.*]

ANGELINA

I don't see why you did n't think love was pleasant, Reginald. I think it 's just—sweet!

REGINALD

ANGEL! ! !

NOW

SCENE—*Porch of a club-house.*
Enter JOAN DASCOTT *and* BILLY NORTON.

JOAN

THAT was a good two-step, Billy, and this is a good night. Let 's sit here a moment. My dear fellow, you 're puffing—you 're getting too old to dance!

BILLY

[*Indignantly.*] Puffing—your grandmother!

JOAN

We 'd better go back. Music, they say, hath charms to soothe the savage— Do sit down and stop pacing—it makes me tired to watch you!

BILLY

Truth is, Joan, I 've something on my mind!

JOAN

On your—WHAT?

BILLY

This may be a joke to you—but it 's dead earnest to me!

JOAN

What *are* you driving at?

BILLY

Fact is—I want to talk to you seriously—Joan—

JOAN

[*Laughs.*] Seriously? All right, Billy; fire away.

BILLY

[*Uncomfortably.*] You know, Joan, I 'm not much on love—

JOAN

Well, there 's nothing serious in that. It 's only when you *are* much on love—or in it—

BILLY

Don't chaff me—I 'm in earnest.

JOAN

'Pologize!

BILLY

I say, I 'm not very long on love patter and all that, but I 've found the girl for me, all right—and—

JOAN

[*Shortly.*] Well, you 're in luck. What more do you want?

BILLY

I want you to advise me, old lady. Truth is, I don't think she has much use for me.

JOAN

What makes you think so?

BILLY

Well—I don't know. I just think so.

JOAN

Why don't you brace up, and ask her like a man?

BILLY

I sort of dread to, for fear she 'll turn me down and not let me see her any more.

JOAN

I see—you prefer a miserable possibility to a miserable certainty.

BILLY

[*Earnestly.*] Do *you* think I 'd have any chance with a girl, Joan?

JOAN

Depends on the girl.

BILLY

[*Desperately.*] I don't see how I could stand much show.

JOAN

Modest Flower! who *is* your iceberg, Billy?

BILLY

Why, it 's—it 's *you,* you know.

JOAN

Me? Oh, great Doodle, what are you talking about?

BILLY

It 's gospel, Joan; it 's always been you.

JOAN

Is this a moon-spell? Do you have these fits often?

BILLY

'T ain't a fit—'t is chronic.

JOAN

You ought to see a specialist about it.

BILLY

That 's why I 've come to you.

JOAN

Well, I can't take your case—the chronic ward is full!

BILLY

Don't joke about it, Joan—I 'm in dead earnest. Do you think you could ever care anything about me, dear?

JOAN

I don't know whether I care or not—I never have thought anything about it.

BILLY

Well, could you—could you take a little time to think about it?

JOAN

Well—I—go on in and dance this. I 'm going to stay here. Don't talk, Billy—just go. Tell Jack Gardner that I 've gone home, if he asks for me.

[*Half an hour later.*]

BILLY

Still here—Joan? A penny for your—

JOAN

I 've been thinking it over, Billy. I suppose I 've always cared a good deal, and did n't know it. Then it 's an advantage that we know each other so well. And—I was thinking that if we got married, we might go into the American Golf Championship together down at Lenox this year.

BILLY

Then it 's yes, Joan?

JOAN

Um-hum.

BILLY

God bless you!—I hope we 'll have good luck, old lady.

JOAN

In the Championship?

BILLY

[*Smiling.*] In the Championship!

THE FIRST LESSON

SCENE—*Country-club grounds.*

They stroll toward the first tee

She speaks

WELL, of course I 've got to learn. For two years I 've held the championship for the only frivolous female under fifty who cannot play golf—and I 'm getting tired of it. You 're under such a disadvantage if you don't speak the language, you know. Why, I 've been to dinners when the conversation might just as well have been in ancient Patagonian, as far as I was concerned. Well, there are several reasons,—in the first place, everybody went wild on the subject, and the easiest and most original attitude was ignorance. And I 'm ignorant enough

—I 've never even *followed* around a course. Oh, that 's where we get the caddy, is n't it? You see, I do know that the caddy is a boy, and not one of the sticks—oh, clubs, I mean. Why do you have to have such a lot of sticks—clubs, I mean? Oh, different ones for different plays. Now, they look just alike to me—except some are fatter than the others. This is the starting-place, is n't it? Where the crowd is—teeing-ground, you call it? There 's a man going to—what do you call it—tee? Let 's go closer so I can see him do it. What 's the little hump of dirt for? Oh—I see. I should n't think you 'd need that; it looks easy enough.

[*Follows man's motions carefully, her eye following the ball into the distance.*]

Oh-h, he 's pretty good, is n't he? Oh—is he a dub? Why, I thought he was good. Now, here goes a girl—let 's see her tee away. What did I say?—Oh, I *meant* tee—off! Is n't she a crank about her little old hump of dirt? Well—[*Disgust*]—that was n't much of a shot, was it? What are all these people standing around for? Dear me! I hate to begin before them. I 'm sure

I can do as well as that girl, though, who just teed—out!

[*Takes club and tries to place her hands on handle according to his directions.*]

I see—right hand like this—um-hum. Free swing—is n't that free enough? Oh, yes, feet on the ground, and only swing from the waist. I see—Oh, I can do it all right. Fix the little ant-hill for me. Now, I 'm to keep my eye on the ball, my feet on the ground, swing from the waist up, follow around, and—and incidentally hit the ball.

[*She swings and smiles proudly, her eye searching the distant horizon for the twirling white ball.*]

Where did it go? Where?

[*A look of dismay obliterates the smile, and her eyes search the ground at her feet.*]

Absurd! Why, I never touched it, did I? Well, *did* you ever? Try it again? How many trials do I get? Well, I know, but I thought I *did* measure the distance. This time I 'll surprise you. Now, look out! Ask that woman to stand back—she bothers me. [*She swings vigorously.*]

Oh, goodness me!—what a "hole"! [*Laughs.*] "Not so deep as a well, nor so wide as a church door,—but 't will serve." It 's hot, is n't it? Now—this time I 'm surely off. One—two—three—go!

[*Swings again.*]

Ah—how far was that, caddy? [*Proudly.*] Twenty feet! Well, that 's pretty good, is n't it? Now, we just walk along, hitting toward that flag. It 'll take me a week to get to the first one. Now, little boy, you give me the biggest club in the bag—how could I be expected to hit anything with this little shinny-stick? I don't care whether it 's the right one or not—I want a big one. Now, here goes! [*She swings.*]

That must be fully *two feet!* Well, I hit it, and that 's something. [*Anxiously.*] Don't you want to go on, and wait for me at the flag? I hate to spoil your game. Well —come on, then, if you 're quite sure I won't spoil your game. Suppose you give my ball one good crack this time to show me how it 's done. Oh—beautiful! It must have gone a mile! [*Admiringly.*] How splendid and strong you are! D' you know, I like it all but the little ball—if you did n't have to

worry about the pesky ball all the time, I think it would be a fine game.

[*Looks around.*]

Everybody is getting ahead of us, just on my account. Now, are n't you sorry you are n't playing with some other girl? Well —if you 're satisfied . . . Oh, here 's your ball. [*Watches him drive.*]

I *wish* I could do that! How long would it take you to teach me to play like that? All your life? Well—you must think I 'm a stupid! Or else you 're a very poor teacher. I see; you think a good teacher ought to be able to keep a pupil forever. No—it would n't work with me. I 've always gotten tired of teachers—like playthings—in a month! I did n't say my teachers were playthings—you are n't listening to me. You 're looking for that ball and neglecting my conversation in a shameful manner! Dear, oh, dear! I have to hit it again!

[*Swings her club.*]

[*Ruefully.*] You 're right—it would take me a lifetime—I never saw such feeble efforts. My!—it 's hot—I never felt the heat worse. Now—what do you do about the river? Pick up your ball and carry it over

the bridge? Drive it over? [*Seriously.*] You don't say so? Oh, I see what you mean. Now, you need n't laugh—how should I know you meant knock it over when you said drive. No—I *did n't* think you meant on horseback! See that boat down there, moored to the tree—[*Sighs*]—does n't it look inviting? How many more holes are there? Sixteen? Oh, gracious! ! ! Where —in the boat? What would I give if you paddled me to Summerdale for lunch? I 'd give anything I own in the world—'pon honor, I would! what can we do with the sticks? Oh, yes, I 'd forgotten the caddy. And evidently he 's forgotten us. He 's actually lying down over there in the shade. Steady her now till I get in.

[*Gets into boat.*]

Oh, this is heaven! It 's awfully good of you, Victor, to be golf pastor and master—but you don't know with what joy and rapture I 'm saying—" Here endeth the first lesson! "

A SUMMER IDYL

SCENE—*Drawing-room.*
Discovered—TOMMY *and a* CALLER.

TOMMY

WE 'VE been at a—now—hotel! Um-hum —we wuz there all the whole summertime. Yes,'n' mamma and papa wuz there too, and Lizzie—she 's the nurse—but she did n't count much because she wuz always talkin' to a waiter there. . . . You bet I did have a good time. They wuz lots of childern there—oh, just wagon-loads—some wuz awful bad ones, like Lester Jones and Jimmie Banks and Bud 'n' Charlie, an'—an'—lots more bad ones, and, gee! we had fun. Us childern had to eat in the childern's dining-room,—just us an' the nurses, you know; an' we ust to fro things—peaches an' crackers an' things—an' onct Lester Jones frowed a spoonful of soft-boiled egg right

at his nurse. You ought to seen her face—gee! An' onct the manager camed in an' tol' us that if we did n't behave we 'd have to go home, an' Bud Allin he had his squirt-gun, an' he made it go off at the manager, an' it all went down his collar in the behind of his neck! Oh, my—he wuz mad! He tried to find who did it, but he could n't, so he just tol' our parients on us, an' they give it to us awful!

Yes, we ust to play on the beach—mornin's. We went in swimmin', an' yanked the ladies' feets frum under 'em. Gee!—you ought to heard 'em yell. Onct I wuz just yankin' Miss Molly's feets out—she wuz a lady there—an' old smarty Archie came out—he wuz her beau—an' he just grabbed me an' ducked me under, an' drownded me—pretty near. But I just guess we got even with him. I tol' the fellows 'bout it, an' at night on the porch—oh, it wuz a great, big porch, you know, an' music an' things—an' nights us kids ust to run round an' catch 'em spoonin'—an' we heard Smarty Archie askin' Miss Molly to go horsebackin' next mornin', so us kids fixed it up, an' we got up early an' put sand-burrs under Smarty

Archie's horse's tail. We stuck 'em on so you could n't tell they wuz there—but the horse he could. Gee! you ought to seen that horse go! Every time he switched his tail he went faster, an' Smarty Archie got throwed an' skinned up, an' us kids wuz good an' glad, 'cause it served him right fur duckin' a kid 'bout half his size.

Sometimes, when it wuz rainy, we stayed in an' played circus an' things—but that wuz n't as much fun, 'cause the girls wuz always stickin' in. Onct when Bud Allin's sister just *would* come, an' we did n't want her, I got that squeezy thing out of my mother's room—my mother cleans her teefs with it—you squeeze it, you know, an' a pink snake comes out—well, we tol' Jessie Allin it wuz candy, an' we 'd give it to her if she 'd go 'way, an' she et the whole thing, an', gee!—she wuz sick an' had a doctor, an' everything, an' then she went an' told on us, just like a old girl, and we caught it, I tell you!

Sometimes we played in the hall—childern must n't, you know, but we ust to when our parients wuz out—an' 'way down at the end they is a hose, you know, like in the

garden, an' onct Bud Allin took it down when we wuz being a fire-engine, an' you ought to seen the water shootin' out, an' we could n't stop it. So we just ran out an' wuz playin' on the beach when they ast us if we did it. Gee!—you ought to seen that hall—it wuz a regular river!

But oh, the mostest fun wuz Harry—he wuz the bell-boy—an' you have a clock in your room, an' you turn the hands round to what you want, an' it rings down-stairs an' Harry brings it. An' we kids 'u'd ring for ice-water in my room an' then run up-stairs to Bud's room, so when Harry came they wuz n't nobody there. Gee!—it ust to make him swear—we ust to hide back of the stairs an' hear him. But—[*Calls.*]—What? All right—I 'm coming. That 's Lizzie—I wish we had a waiter for her here—she bothers me lots. Well, good-by—there 's lots more I could tell you 'bout that hotel, but I got to go. It 's a awful nice place—you ought to go there. [*Calls.*] Yes, Lizzie, I 'm a-comin'! [*Exit.*]

BELOW STAIRS

SCENE—*Servants' hall.*
Enter the BUTLER, *who drops into a chair, with a deep sigh.*
Enter the MAID, *who also drops down, sighing.*

BUTLER

Are they aff?

MAID

Well, I hope so. The carriage door shlammed before I came down.

BUTLER

[*Fans languidly with a paper.*] Phwat a day! It began wrang this marnin', an' its bin gittin' warse shteady all day. Firsht, she come into me panthry, an' sez to me face —*to me face,* moind ye—that the silver had

not bin claned fur a wake! I sez, "Madam, it wuz claned foive days ago to-day!" "Well," she sez, "it's black—an' ye have n't had a dinner party nor a lunch fur two days, an' not a thing on earth to do but clane the silver!" Thin I shpoke roight up. "If there wuz min enough in the shtable," I sez, "so 's the under butler would n't have to ride on the box wid yez," I sez, "the silver could be claned twicet a wake. But," I sez, "wid havin' to *e*-conymize on the under butler—I do the best I can, mum," I sez.

MAID

Sure ye do—we all do. If she 'd e-conymize a little on her clothes, we could have another under butler, an' it wud be more comfortable fur all av us!

BUTLER

Just hand me a sip av that sherry, Maggie, to quiet me narves. Thin, at dinner, I was 'mos' frantic. She wuz a bundle av narves, an' he wuz a bundle av grunts! I wuz so flushtered I gave him the wrang ceegar and

I gave her Scotch fur rye—an' all those Zuzus at the pahrty rubbered their heads aff. I saw that old Mrs. Smith-Smythe a-grinnin', an' I wanted to shpill champagne down her back!

MAID

Well, ye ain't the only mourner on the binch! She has n't bin to bed befare three o'clock fur t'ree days, *an'* she 's crass as two shticks! It 's "Maggie" here, an' "Maggie" there! An' " Not those shoes, Maggie," an' " I tol' ye to have that opery cloak claned!" By Gar, I thought I 'd shake her! " Ye tol' me about that cloak this marnin'," I sez. " Did ye ixpict me to have it claned an' home by to-noight?" I sez. She give me a look, but she 's too shmart to make me rale mad!

BUTLER

Look at the way we wor-ruk! From noine in the marnin' till eight at noight—an' *thim* not out more than three days a wake to lunch, an' four noights a wake to dinner! An' phwat do ye git fur your sarvice? A palthry hunderd a month an' yer livery—an'

no thanks! It 's a harrud loife, Maggie, an' *that* 's no joke!

MAID

Well, look at *me*—phwat with her breakfast to be took up at nine, an' her lunch clothes laid out, an' her afternoon clothes claned, an' her dinner clothes pressed, I 've niver a minute to meself. Now, you git a rest whin they 're aff to dinner, but not me!

BUTLER

[*Grins.*] Go an—you were shlapin' two hours yisterday!

MAID

Well, goodness knows, I naded it. Don 't she git in at all hours, an' don't I have to wait up? . . . Well, phwat 's doin' to-night?

BUTLER

[*Languidly.*] I 've a few frinds comin' to late supper in the Servants' Hall.

MAID

Am I in ut?

BUTLER

Sure ye are, Maggie. Ye're a foine gyurl, machree; d' ye think I 'd lave ye out?

MAID

Who 's comin'?

BUTLER

Kivers laid fur tin!

MAID

Silver an' plate?

BUTLER

Sure.

MAID

Wine?

BUTLER

Sure!

MAID

Dancin' aftherwards?

BUTLER

Thim 's um. Me an' you to lead the cowtillion.

MAID

Cowtillion—ye don't say!

BUTLER

I do. Ye know they are in the habit av pitchin' their cowtillion favors into the waste-basket the marnin' after—an' I 'm in the habit av collictin' thim out. Oh, say, I 've got a grand lot av shtuff—'nuff for tin figgers!

MAID

Oh, say—ain't we commy-il-fote?

[*She rises and sweeps by him, saying,*]

Ring the bell, plaze, Martin, fur me maid.

I must driss fur Mr. Martin Matthew Moriarity's ball. Order me carriage at 'livin. Ah, here ye are, Maggie—lay out me green satin an' me yallow coat—

[*She laughs and changes to her natural manner.*]

I 'll be wid ye in the twinklin' av an eye, Moriarity! [*She runs out.*]

BUTLER

[*Looks after her.*] Maggie, ye 're a foine gyurl. [*He rises and stretches and yawns.*] I don't know—I *may* marry that gyurl—she 'mos' suits me. Well, we 'll see. [*Exit.*]

ON WOMAN'S RIGHTS

SCENE—*School-house at Bird Center. Discovered—Woman's Club in session.* MRS. WIGGIN *takes the floor.*

MRS. WIGGIN

[*Begins in hasty and deprecatory manner.*] I ain't a-goin' to try to explain to you—what 's thet, Miss Parsons? Address the cheer? Why, what you talkin' 'bout—I ain't addressin' no cheer!

[*She pauses while the parliamentary rule is explained to her. Dawning intelligence seen on her face.*]

Oh, I see—it 's parlymentry, is it? Waal—I 'm glad you tol' me. Is it a he-cheer, or a she-cheer, Miss Parsons? [*Angrily.*] Call me to order? Who 's a-callin' me to order? You 'tend to your own order, Malviny Springer, an' you 'll have your hands full. I don't notice so much order in your

housekeepin'. [*To chairman.*] What 's thet? [*Pause.*] Oh—I see. Waal, now, why did n't ye explain thet to me at first—Malviny—excuse me. Ye see, I ain't ben to no club meetin' before—the first one ye had, I wuz havin' trouble with my hired help. Ye all know Jemima Hawkins—waal, she 's ben with me goin' on ten years—jest like one of the family, an' she had to go home to her folks—she 's got a lot of folks, Jemima has—her father an' mother an' nine brothers an' sisters, an' they all got some disease or other. Why, oncet I wuz up there to see Miss Hawkins, an' she lined them kids up, an' counted 'em out—No. 1, heart disease—No. 2, rickets—No. 3, lunger, etc., down thru the list. I reckon they got all the diseases in the catechism, an' so Jemima had to go home of course, an' so I could n't come to the club meetin', an' next meetin' ye had, the twins wuz croupy, an'—what? Oh, yes—waal, excuse me—I 'll git down to bizness now.

My paper 's on Women's Rights—an' I wuz a-goin' to hev it all writ out, an' tied up with a blue ribbon an' all, but it took so long, I give thet up, an' so I ain't really goin' to

read no paper at all, but will speak jest frum the tablets of mem'ry.

I don't know jest what Women's Rights is, but I don't s'pose thet makes any difference in a speech, an' there 's one thing I 'm dead sure I do know, an' thet is what Women's Rights ought to be. A woman ought to hev rights—she 's a weak creeture, 'longside of feller-man, an' she ought to be allowed her rights. Woman ain't never had a fair show—she was handiclapped frum the first, bein' made out of a rib, the way she wuz, an' so much ought not to be expected of woman as otherwise.

Man hez always ben the stronger animal, but woman ain't without her weapings —namely and to wit, nails, feet, and tongue, —specially tongue,—an' with these few, she rose to her present peenuckle of glory!

Women frum the first hez ben the leader —Eve led Adam, an' we 've ben leadin' men ever sence, so of course some rights hez ben growin' along with us. There 's several I think of—namely an' to wit: 1, the right to change her mind—2, the right to say the last word—3, the right to ask her man what time he got in—4, the right to mean yes

when she says no, and others, etcetry. To take these one by one an' sing'larly we see No. 1—the right to change her mind. Of course, all humans change the mind, but specially women—but how you ever goin' to learn anything if ye don't change the mind? I ust to think thet a husband wuz a great convenience—'fore I got one. Now how wuz I to learn myself thet a husband 's worse 'n twins, unless I change my mind? Thet 's what I ask you folks, an' you 're all women, an' had the same experience, so I need n't say no further on thet head. No. 2—the right to git the last word. Now, I hold thet somebody hez got to git the last word, so it may as well be woman (an' usually is), but woman gits little enough here below, an' she may as well git what she can. No. 3—the right to ask a man what time he got in. Waal, it ain't a-goin' to do her no good to ask about it, fur there ain't a man on earth thet 'll tell the truth, but it 's a satisfaction fur her to know what a good liar she 's got! Now, just to show what a mean-sperited man 'ull descend to—I knowed a man thet said "Twelve o'clock" to the usual question, an' jest then the cuckoo

clock hollered three, an' he up an' cuckooed ten times. But law—he found out thirteen *wuz* a unlucky number! So, you see, woman has a right to all the rights she 's got.

Now, there is some females as is a-pinin' fur the right to vote in polyticks, 'long with the men, an' we all know one sister who leaves her children to the care of umselves, whilst she 's a-trottin' round, tryin' to git other women to vote. She 's got the worst kids in the county, an' ought to be home managin' them. I went to town oncet to hear what she had to say, an' left the twins with their dad, an' while I wuz gone, one of um fell in the well, an' wuz most drownded, an' the other fed whitewash to the calf, so I made up my mind I 'd had enough of the votin' bizness.

Now, I know I don't want no man monkeyin' round my kitchen, an' I reckon men feels the same. Polyticks is men's work. Men hez run polyticks fur a good many years, an' I reckon they 're welcome to keep on doin' it. I don't want the job. What would we do with a woman president, fur instance? I bet she never could git a cabinet together, an' 't 'ud be worse 'n a sewin'-bee

if she did. So women hed better stay to hum. The rights ye want is these—namely an' to wit—to manage yer hum, yer childern, an' yer husband to suit yerself, an' I got my opinion of any female as can't do thet. In closin', I would say—thet rights is rights—an' women is women—an' they ought to hev 'em! [*Exit.*]

A HIGHLY COLORED SKETCH

SCENE—MELINDY JONSING'S *kitchen.*
Discovered—MELINDY, *singing.*
Enter MR. ABRAHAM EBENEZER WHITE.

WHITE

GOOD EBENIN', Miss Melindy Jonsing.

MELINDY

Oh, it 's you—is it?

WHITE

No—it ain't me—it 's some other nigger. Is yo' at home dis ebenin'?

MELINDY

I don' know if I is or not. I mought be, an' again I mought n't—what you want, anyway, Mr. Abraham White?

WHITE

Want? I don' want nuffin, I come to make a call on yo'. Ain' yo' never see a gen'leman makin' a call befo' ?

MELINDY

Sho' I is—but all de gen'leman what call on me is in de habit ob sendin' up deir cyard.

WHITE

Well, hol' on—I gwine sen' up ma cyard if you-all gib me time. Whar 's yo' butler? I ain' see no han' stretched out fo' to take ma cyard!

MELINDY

[*Grins and bridles.*] Well, hyah 's de hand, now let 's see de cyard. Who yo' say yo' want to see dis ebenin' ?

WHITE

Miss Melindy Jonsing is de lady's name.

MELINDY

Well, I don' know if she 'll see yo' or not —she ain't so stuck on yo'. Say, how long yo' gwine stay here, Mistah White?

WHITE

Till I gits kicked out.

MELINDY

Well, yo' mought as well sit down, den.

WHITE

Sure I mought—jes' as cheap.

[*Starts to sit, then sees the lack of chairs.*]

Say, look-a-yere, I don' want to sit on de only cheer—yo' sit down.

MELINDY

No, I don' want to sit down, I ruther stand up.

WHITE

Aw, go on—sit down.

MELINDY

No, sah—I could n't think ob deprivin' yo' ob yo' seat.

WHITE

No depravity at all, Miss, no depravity at all. [*She sits down.*]
How 's all yo' folks?

MELINDY

Ma folks is all right—how 's yo' folks?

WHITE

Ma folks is all right—'ceptin' George Washington an' Grover Cleveland an' Abraham Lincoln—dey 's all got somethin' de matter wid dem, but de res' ob us is able to take a pork chop now an' den!

MELINDY

Dat sholy is good news, Mr. White—I 'se glad to hear dat. . . .

WHITE

Say—look-a-yere—did n't I see yo' flaxin' round wid dat barber-shop coon las' night?

MELINDY

Mr. Rastus Harris—if dat 's de gen'leman yo' 'se 'ludin' at—done took me to a minstrel show.

WHITE

I ain' got no use fo' dat coon!

MELINDY

He ain' got no use fo' yo'—neder. I think he 's the swellest, mos' galubrious coon I ever set ma eyes on. Ma!—he does blow de money. He don' hol' on to a quarter lak it wuz a ticket into Kingdom Come.

WHITE

Yes—well, it 's easy 'nuff to blow yo' money when yo' make it shootin' craps, but when yo' work fo' all de money yo' gits—yo' don' go out an' blow it all one night on no flirtatious nigger woman what don' know yo' on de street de next time she meets yo'.

MELINDY

Look-a-yere—Mistah White—who yo' 'ludin' at?

WHITE

I ain' 'ludin' at nobody.

MELINDY

Well, dat 's a good thing. I don' know as yo' got any place crisiticisin' anybody. Any man dat 's sittin' up to yaller trash like dat Anastasia Brown ain' got no place crisiticisin' nobody!

WHITE

Who 's sittin' up to Anastasia Brown?

MELINDY

Why, yo' is—Ain' I see yo' dancin' wid her at de Jolly Club's ball?

WHITE

Well, I only danced wid her once.

MELINDY

Well, dat wuz once mo' dan anybody else did. Ma! I thought I would die a-laffin' de way she wuz a-sittin' round de wall—I reckon she 's gwine fin' out her eristercratical ways won't go down in our set!

WHITE

Lawd—I felt sorry fo' de gyurl!

MELINDY

Yes, yo' did. I yeard how yo' took her home, an' how yo' kissed her.

WHITE

Kissed her? Kissed dat Anastasia Brown? Why, I 'd jes' as soon kiss ol' Pete Thompson's mule as dat trash. Who tol' yo' I kissed her?

MELINDY

Well, dat 's all right who tol' me yo' kissed her. I don' see how yo' expect to keep company wid high-toned ladies!

WHITE

Oh, yo' ain' so much, flaxin' 'round wid dat barber-shop coon. Anastasia Brown ain' de only scarecrow in de corn-field! . . . Now, look yere, Melindy Jonsing—I 'se put up wid all de foolin' I 'se gwine to—yo' is got to take yo' choice. Yo' 'se mine or yo' 'se his'n. Now, is yo' or ain't yo' ?

MELINDY

I don' know if I is—or not.

WHITE

Is yo' goin' to gib up dat barber-shop coon?

MELINDY

Ma!—he has got de fine mannerses.

WHITE

Yo' gwine quit foolin' wid dat crap-shooter?

MELINDY

Ma!—he does throw de money.

WHITE

Yo' gwine leave off foolin' wid dat second-hand fashion plate?

MELINDY

Mebbe he don' wear de fine clothes!

WHITE

Well, go on, an' take him, den, an' yo' 're welcome to him. Ob all de snub-nosed, bow-legged cigar-store Indians I eber see, he 's de worst. He simply nashewates me—dat 's what he does. I would n't take him to a dawg-fight. But if he 's de pineapple ob yo' eye, why, go on an' marry him—yo' got ma sympathy. [*Starts to go out.*]

MELINDY

Well, what yo' rushin' round here fo'—lak a chicken wid his head off?

WHITE

I ain' gwine stay where I ain' wanted.

MELINDY

Who said yo' wuz n't wanted?

WHITE

Why—yo' did. If yo' gwine marry dat coon I can't afford to 'sociate wid yo'—I can't risk ma reputation.

MELINDY

Who said I wuz gwine to marry him?

WHITE

Yo' said so yo'self—dat 's who!

MELINDY

Oh, I nebber did say so—I ain't got no mo' intention ob marryin' wid him dan I has ob marryin'—yo' !

WHITE

[*Firmly.*] Well, look-a-yere—Melindy Jonsing, if yo' ain' a-goin' to marry him, yo' is a-goin' to marry me!

MELINDY

Is dat so? Who said so?

WHITE

I said so—dat 's who said so.

MELINDY

Well—I lak yo' nerve.

WHITE

'Cose yo' do—ladies always laks a nervous man! [*Puts arm about her.*]
Say, Melindy, does yo' lub yo' honey?

MELINDY

Oh, so-so. I ain' so crazy 'bout yo' !

WHITE [*sings*]

Can't think ob nuffin else but you—you—you—
I 'd die fo' you—I sigh fo' you.
Nights when I 'se sleepin', I wakes to fin' I 'se weepin'—
All fo' you, Luly-loo—
I 'se a-dreamin' all de time ob you, Lu-lu!

[*Exeunt.*]

A DARK-BROWN DIPLOMAT

SCENE—MAMMY'S *kitchen.*
Discovered—MAMMY *singing at her ironing-board.*

MAMMY

YAS 'M—Miss Winston—yo' callin' me? I 'se hyah in de kitchen, ma'am. Yo' lookin' kind ob tired like, dis mohnin'—I hope yo' ain' feelin' badly. . . . Ma'am—mad wif me? Why, 'fo' Gawd, Miss Winston—what I done? Things a-missin' from yo' kitchen? Why, dat mighty strange—I bin hyah in de kitchen all de time, an' I ain' missed nuffin. . . . Does I take things home wif me? Why, yas 'm—sometimes—we *all* does. Night 'fo' las'—lemme see—yas 'm, I reckon I did take a few things dat night—dat was de night I tuk some things to ole Miss John-

sing—she 's so poly. I ain't tuk nuffin much, tho'—jes' a carcass ob a ole chicken, I know yo' ain' gwine hab no use fo'. Mos' a whole chicken? No 'm—yo' mistookin' 'bout dat, Miss Winston—war n't nuffin but ole handful ob bones dat I tuk. Why, Miss Johnsing only got four childern, an' dey was n't but one helpin' round—so yo' see yo'self, ain't nuffin but a carcass. What else I tuk? I—I don' jes' recomember—Sugar? Yas 'm, I reckon dey was a leetle sugar—an' sweet potaters? Yes 'm—jes' a few, knotty ones, I know yo' ain' gwine hab no use fo'. Buttah—yas 'm—mite o' buttah. Can't hab sweet potaters widout buttah, yo' know, Miss Winston. Cake?—no 'm, dey wa'n't no cake. I reckon dat 's 'bout all dey wuz in dat basket. Does I know what, ma'am? Dat *stealin'?* 'Fo' Gawd—Miss Winston—*dat* ain't stealin'. What *is* stealin'? Why—I reckon, when yo' bust in de houses ob peoples yo' don't know—dat yo' ain't got no 'quaintance wif—dat 's stealin'! Why ain't I ask yo' fo' de things? Well, Miss Winston, I know, when yo' heah how poly ole Miss Smiff is—I know yo' gwine give 'em to me—so what 's de use ob

askin' yo'? Did I say Miss Smiff—well, I meant Miss Johnsing—it wuz Miss Johnsing I tuk 'em to—she 's de one dat 's poly. Et 'em maself?—Miss Winston—I gib yo' ma word ob honor—I ain' had a smell ob dem things maself! Yas 'm—I heah yo'. Yas 'm, I gwine promise nevah to do dat no mo'. I gwine ask yo' fo' eb'rything I take. Yas 'm, I know de cream go awful fast—like—but it 's dat cat yo' got. Dat 's de mos' expensingest cat I ebber done know nuffin about. She gits on de breakfust-table 'fo' yo'-all gits down in de mohnin', and gits her haid in de cream-pitcher. I cotched her at it lots ob times. Whip her? Lawd—Miss Winston—I do whip her. Why, udder day I fired a flatiron at her haid—but it don't do no good. Can't get cream out 'n de bottle! Dat cat can't? Why, Miss Winston—yo' don't know dat cat. Why, I seen her get onto de shelf, an' stick her claws in de pasteboard top ob de bottle, and yank it off, an' den stick her udder paw in an' lick up de cream. Dat 's de truf I 'm tellin' yo'. . . .

De cake? No 'm, de cat don't eat de cake—it 's de miceses. I nevah did see a house so full ob miceses. Some mohnin's I come

down to git de breakfust, an' I fin' dey hab et up half a cake ober night! Dat cat? She won't tech miceses—she got to hab cream—she has!

Ma'am? Mistah Winston says ma cookin' don' make up fo' ma 'stravagance? Why, I don' know what he means. Ain' no one ebber found no fault befo' wid ma cookin'—nevah dat I heard tell ob. Why, Judge Harlow—whah I was 'fo' I came hyah—he said I was de mos' original-est cook he ebber done heard tell ob. He said ma cookin' beat all—dat what he said. He said he did n't think it wuz right fo' him to deprive humanity ob ma cookin'—an' he paid me extra fo' to go an' cook fo' somebody else. He said when yo' got a good thing—'t was yo' duty to push it 'long. Dat 's what he said. Dey ain't nevah anybody foun' no fault wid ma cookin' befo'.

Well, I reckon I ain' seem to suit yo'-all—so I bettah be movin' 'long. I 'se awful sorry to go, I is. Yo' bin mighty kind to me, yo' an' Mistah Winston. I don' reckon I 'se ebber gwine fin' no chillen I like as well as yo' chillen. Lots ob folks won't hab chillen playin' roun' deir kitchen, but I likes it.

Dey 's powerful lot ob company in chillens. [*Calls.*] What dat? No, now, Miss Alice, honey, yo' can't make patty-cakeses now—I 'se busy talkin' to yo' ma. What? Yo' gib me a kiss if I let yo'? Well, yo' come right 'long hyah an' gib me de kiss, an' we 'll see 'bout dem cakeses.

[*Watches child in, and bends to kiss her, then shoos her out.*]

Mighty smart child, Miss Alice is—I 'se mighty fond ob her—an' she lub ole mammy too.

Well, Miss Winston, *when* yo' want me to go? Don' want me to go? But if yo' don' lak ma cookin' an' ma 'stravagance—I 'low yo' ain't want me to stay. I 'se willin' to go—I 'd ruther go dan fo' yo' to hab any hard thoughts about me. I 'se a po' ole woman, Miss Winston, but I got a honest heart. Yo' say yo' ain't sendin' me off—yo' just a-scoldin' me? Well, bress de Lord—honey—yo' did gib me a scare—I thought yo' gwine turn me out dis time, sho. Miss Winston, I gib yo' ma solemn word—I gwine reform. I gwine be so savin', yo' won't know me. . . . Now what yo' want fo' dinner to-night? . . . Oh, yes, 'fo' I for-

git it—could yo' let me off on Sunday, fo' de day—I want to go to a funeral—ole Miss Johnsing's. Yas 'm—same lady. Well—she ain' dead yet. Yo' see, it 's lak dis. She 's mighty poly, and likely to go any minute, an' she say dat de corpse ain' got no show at all at a funeral, so she gwine hab hers 'fo' she goes. It 's gwine be Sunday—all de colored folks in town is gwine. Yas, I 'd like to go all day—it 's gwine be mighty long funeral. Yas 'm—thank yo'—Miss Winston, I hope yo' can 'range it fo' me. I sut'nly would 'preciate it. [*Listens.*] What 's dat? Dat 's dem chillen on ma clean back steps. I gwine snuk out dere an' catch 'em at it.

[*Tiptoes to door, then breaks out.*]

Yo' chillen—what yo' doin' dere? Ain' I tol' yo' not to play on ma clean steps? Yo' want me to break yo' necks. [*Exit.*]

AT MME. NEWBERRY'S

SCENE—MME. NEWBERRY'S *Fashionable Finishing School.*

Discovered—JANE MORTIMER, *secretary to* MME. NEWBERRY, *sitting at the office desk and interviewing candidates.*

Enter, with immense empressement, MRS. PAYSON DE SLEYSTER *and her daughter,* ELEANORA.

MRS. PAYSON DE SLEYSTER

[*In a large, mellifluous voice accustomed to command.*]

I WISH to see Mme. Newberry—will you send in my card? She is busy, you say,—well—*I* am Mrs. Payson de Sleyster—no doubt she will see *me.* She makes it a rule to see no one during teaching hours? Dear me!—how tiresome! I suppose I *could* come again, but it would inconvenience me

greatly. [*Hesitates.*] Well—I suppose I could transact my business with you if necessary—but I would prefer to deal with Mme. Newberry direct.

I wish to make some inquiries about the school, preparatory to placing my daughter, Eleanora, in Mme. Newberry's charge. How large is the school? Indeed? That 's unfortunate—I should have preferred it smaller. Are there really *nice* girls in the school? Ah—Eleanora has associated with none but the best, of course, and I should not wish her to form any ties with ordinary persons. I do not wish her to study much—she is not strong—oh, yes—what do you teach?

[*She takes catalogue from secretary and reads aloud.*]

"Voice-culture, music, dancing, fencing, pronunciation, deportment, reading, French, German, and elocution." [*Languidly.*] Um-hum—these do very well. [*With more interest.*] Will she learn to enter a drawing-room? Good—and to converse on topics of—a—interest? Conversation classes, you say? Literature, art, science, politics—is *that* the sort of thing

they discuss? I did n't mean that sort of topics of interest—I meant the sort of talk that one needs at a dinner. I do not wish her to learn to discuss politics—it 's no topic for a lady. Besides, I would n't have Eleanora become a strong-minded woman for anything in the world. I have always formed her opinions for her, and I have been very careful what she learns.

The main difficulty with Eleanora is her shyness. I can't imagine where she gets it —not from my family, nor her father's, either, I 'm sure. It 's a great trial to me—a great affliction. I 've brought her to Mme. Newberry to have this overcome. I feel convinced that it can be trained out of her. Of course, in society, to-day, a shy woman does n't get anywhere. None of Eleanora's friends are shy, I 'm sure—and she has always been sent to the most expensive schools—I really don't see where she gets it. Well, I hope you *can* do something with her.

Now about the hours. Of course I do not wish her to study outside of school hours. She always gets so interested in her work that she is absolutely good for nothing else.

Of course, I do not wish her school to interfere with other things. I have always thought too much study unhealthy for a young girl.

Well, then she can begin on Monday—at *nine?* Dear me—that seems very early. Is it really necessary that she should be here at nine? Well—it seems a barbarous hour to me! Her name? Oh, yes—Eleanora Payson de Sleyster, 32 Astor Court. Age nineteen. Suppose you just put down on that card—"special attention to shyness," so Mme. Newberry will not forget. I will send you a check to-day. What is the—a—a—? Oh, is that all? Why, I paid five hundred more at her last school! Are you sure that really nice girls are in this school? Well—she may try it a week or so. I think that is all. Come along, Eleanora. Good morning.

II

Enter a gentlemanly looking young woman with a strong jaw and a long stride. She speaks in a tiny, threadlike voice which is unspeakably funny in connection with her mannish manners.

She speaks

Is Mme. Newberry here? Well, I want to speak to her. When will she be at leisure? Oh, you 're her secretary, are you? Well, you 'll do just as well. I 'm a lecturer—and I wish to develop my voice a little bit. I have understood that I could have it done here. What sort of lecturer? Why, *I 'm* Elmira Beechum! [*Huge surprise.*] Have n't you ever heard of me? I 'm one of the best-known Lyceum lecturers in the West to-day, and before many years have rolled away the whole length and breadth of this land from the gray Atlantic to the blue Pacific shall ring with the name of Beechum! No, I 'm no relation to the Liver Pill man.

My desire is to become the greatest reformer of our times. All can see that the "times are out of joint," that society, conventions, matrimony, the family, the state, and the nation all need revolutionizing—all can see that, I say—but few have the power to undertake such reform. This is the task I've set myself. I intend to move thousands by my eloquence; to arouse them to some realization of the frightful condition of things in general!

How do I expect to accomplish this? Ah, that is my secret. It is the most comprehensive plan evolved by the human brain since the days of Napoleon. I have had it copyrighted, and when the time comes I'll astonish the world with it!

The only thing I need now is a little more voice, and I've come to Mme. Newberry to get it. I only have a few weeks to spend in this city before starting on a tour of Dakota, so I thought I might get my voice improved before I start. She could only give me the principles of voice development, you say? Well, if I like her, I may come back after the Dakota trip. Do you think I could take a lesson this morning? I don't want

to miss any time. It 's ten-thirty now. See that watch? The people of Osceolo gave that to me as a thank-offering for showing them in what frightful slavery they live. Strange that you never heard of me! Never heard of my lecture—"Reformation of the Universe"? Here 's some of my clippings—see this one from Witch's Gulch, Texas—"Miss Beechum's lecture 'Reformation of the Universe' is one of the unchallenged literary triumphs of the age!"

You think it would n't pay me to study for a few weeks, you say? She could n't do anything with my voice in that time? Why not? I 've got a very good voice indeed—all I want is a little more of it. Well—you need n't hem and haw about it—I expect there are other places where I can get a naturally fine voice brushed up a bit—where they 'll be only too glad to have the name of Elmira Beechum enrolled upon their roster!

[*She makes a dignified but haughty exit.*]

III

Enter sweet-looking girl with retiring manner. She blushes, and seems to hesitate before speaking.

I w-w-WANT to sp-sp-speak to M-m-madame Newberry, p-p-pl-please. Oh, y-y-you 're the s-s- [*Whistles*] secretary, are you? Well, I w-w-w- [*Whistles*] want to l-l-learn to con-con-converse. You see, I st-st-stut-stutter a l-l-little, and I th-th-thought that p-p-probably she c-c-could c-c- [*Whistles*] cure me.

I 've always recited a g-g-good d-d-deal, and everybody at h-h-home thinks I could g-g-go on the st-stage, if I only did n't st-st-stutter a l-l-little. I can do the b-b-balcony scene fr-fr-from " R-R-Romeo and J-Juliet "—by Shakspere. The one ab-ab-about "R-R-Romeo—Ru-Ru-Romeo, wherefore art th-thou, R-R-Romeo? " I pl-pl-played both parts when I gr-gr-raduated from h-h-high sc-school, and everybody said that it was as g-g-good as J-J-Julia Ma-Ma-Marlowe! I c-can do the two p-parts for y-y-you, if you w-w-want me to.

Of c-c-course, if I st-st-stuttered very badly, I c-could n't th-th- [*Whistles*] think of going on the st-st-stage, but I th-th-thought that M-M-Madame Newberry m-m-might cure me in a m-m-m-month or so. Oh, y-yes—I *have* b-b-been to a sc-school of st-stuttering. I was there a y-y- [*Whistles*] year, but I did n't l-l-like their m-m-method there.

You don't th-th-think she could cure me if a regular doctor could n't? Well, I 'd rather see M-M-Madame Newberry herself, if you don't m-m-mind. At t-t-ten to-morrow? W-well, I 'll be in and d-d-do the b-b-balcony sc- [*Whistles*] scene from " R-Romeo and J-J-Juliet " by Shakspere. G-g-good-by.

IV

Enter a very dressy young person who switches into a chair

She speaks

THIS is a school of acting, is n't it? I want to take a few lessons before going on the

stage. No, I have n't studied before—that is, not much. I don't believe in studying much—it takes all the naturalness out of you. Well, I have n't decided yet just what sort of actress I 'll be. I can do tragedy and comedy both. I can do the potion scene from "Juliet" and the sleep-walking scene from "Lady Macbeth." The elocution teacher down home said he never heard anybody do the potion scene any better 'n I do it, and he 'd heard 'most every great actor there is. I do a lot of other things. Do you know a play called "A Woman's Wrongs"? Well, it 's the saddest thing you ever heard. It always makes everybody cry. I almost always cry myself when I do it—oh, it 's a grand thing. I 'm just crazy about getting on the stage. Of course, my family are n't for it—they think it 's awful; but if you 're born for it you might as well go ahead. I think you ought to do what you 're cut out to—don't you?

Everybody says it 's easy to get into a good company if you come out of one of these stage schools—so I thought I 'd try this one. How long do you think it would take me to get ready for the stage? Ten

years? For goodness sake—do you suppose I 'm going to waste ten years getting ready? Why, in ten years I expect to be at the head of my own company. It does n't take long to be a star, now. All you have to do is to get in with some pushing manager.

I *have* thought some of grand opera—I can sing a little. I always sang in the choir at home. We gave "Esther" once and I played the lead, and everybody was crazy about it. Whenever there 's a party at home they always ask me to sing something from grand opera or the "Rosary." It goes like this, you know.

[*She sings the "Rosary," unaccompanied and wandering aimlessly from key to key.*]

I think I 'd rather be an actress, though—you have to be so careful when you 're a grand-opera star—can't eat much, nor stay up late. You don't think this school is what I want? If it 's going to take you ten years to get me ready, I 'm sure of it. I just want a few months' work and then a position. I think the school ought to guarantee the position in a good company. You can't do that? Well, then, that settles it. I 'm

sorry. I suppose I would have been a good advertisement for you—but I have to think of myself, you know. Good-by.

[*She sails out.*]

V

Enter a small girl, overdressed, quite unaccompanied, and bearing all the marks of a stage child.

She speaks

I 'M the little girl the lady came to see you about yesterday. Yes, I 'm Pearl—" Pearl —the Child Wonder," they call me on the bills. I 'm a vaudeville actress, you know, but I 'm out of an engagement now, so somebody told my mother I ought to go to school while we 're layin' off. I can, because we 're flush now,—'cause I 've made good everywhere. I tell you " Pearl—the Child Wonder " gets the " hand " everywhere. I told her I would n't come to any readin'-writin'-'rithmetic school—'cause I hate 'em —but if it was singin' and dancin' an' all that, I 'd just as soon.

Oh, I do song and dance, and pieces with lightning change. Did n't you ever hear me? For goodness sake—where you been living? I 've been touring the U. S. for ten years. Oh, yes, they always bill me eight years old—people like you young, you know; but, honest-to-goodness, I 'm twelve.

Oh, no—I don't get tired of it—I 'm used to it. It 's layin' off, like I am now, that makes *me* tired. That 's why I 'd just as soon come to your school. What are you goin' to teach me? I 'll do a turn, so you can see what I can do.

[*She recites, "Little Mabel—little Mabel, with her face against the pane," etc., in a sobbing voice, with very accurate gestures. Then she does the inevitable Swiss Mountain song with yodel chorus, doing a sort of clog-dance.*]

One of my hits is the "Florodora" sextette.

[*She sings the sextette—leaping from the place where the man stands to the place where the girl stands. She does it very solemnly.*]

Do you know a piece called the "Drunkard's Child"? The first verse goes like this—

A sweet child knelt
At her mother's knee
To say her evening prayer,
When all at once
A drunkard's step
Rang out upon the stair.

There 's ten verses—it always makes 'em cry, I 'll tell you. Then I know a lot more stuff—an' dances, of course. All right—go on an' tell me what you 'll make me do if I stay here. Learn to speak correct—do you mean grammar? I won't study that—I don't like that. Study real poetry? No, sir! I want funny pieces, or sad ones—I don't want no poetry! Spellin' an' deportment? Well, I guess not—I ain't a-goin' to study none of those things. If you won't teach me some new pieces and some new steps—I won't learn nothin'. What 's the use? I don't need none of those things in my business. I 'm makin' good everywhere, *now*. I guess I don't want none of your finishin' school! Well, I 'll be off an' "break the news to mother"—so long!

[LITTLE PEARL *flounces out.*]

HOW IT HAPPENED

SCENE—*Beach by moonlight.*
Discovered—MISS AUDREY GAY, *a romantic young thing.* MR. JOHN MARVEL, *not so young nor romantic.*

I

SHE

[*Sighs.*] It 's lovely, is n't it—the moon on the water and everything?

HE

By Jove, it *is* lovely—the moon on the water—and everything.

SHE

It almost makes you want to be a poet, does n't it? Only poets are always so poor.

I know a man who writes the sweetest things about love and summer, and things for newspapers—and he says he does n't make enough to keep him in shoe-strings. Is n't that dreadful? Don't you think we ought to do something for our poets, Mr. Marvel?

HE

Yes, I do; I think we ought to kill them at birth.

SHE

Oh, how dreadful! Don't you like poets, Mr. Marvel?

HE

Can't say I do. I know too many of them. We 've got an over-supply on hand. . . . Let 's talk of something interesting.

SHE

Well, what do you think *is* interesting?

HE

Let 's talk about—you.

SHE

Oh, but I 'm not—

HE

Well, you 're so pretty, you don't have to be. [*Aside.*] I ought to be kicked for that. By Jove!—she thinks it 's a compliment. Tell me what sort of thing you like?

SHE

What sort of things do you think I 'd like?

HE

Well, you see, I 've only known you three days.

SHE

But that 's a long time at a summer resort.

HE

So it is. I suppose I ought to know your innermost thoughts by this time. Unfortu-

nately, I 've been looking at you, instead of thinking about you. What are you most interested in, in the world?

SHE

Men—you mean?

HE

[*Laughs.*] So that 's what you like best!

SHE

[*Embarrassed.*] Oh, I did n't understand. I did n't know you meant—I—well, I *said* I liked poetry.

HE

So you did. What brand do you prefer?

SHE

Oh, I like Ella Wheeler Wilcox—don't you?

HE

Heaven forbid!

SHE

And sometimes there 's lovely poetry in the " Smart Set " and those magazines.

HE

Yes? Well—poetry—I 've got that down as an absorbing interest. Next.

SHE

I like novels, too.

HE

"Janice Meredith" and—"The Duchess"?

SHE

[*Nods.*] How 'd you know?

HE

How about the drama?

SHE

Oh, theater, you mean. I love it. Did you see James K. Hackett in—

HE

Alas—no. Theater is three—now let 's have something really frivolous—society —dancing?

SHE

Oh, yes; I love them.

HE

And men?

SHE

Um-hum.

HE

I 'll tell you about your ideal—he 's six feet tall, square-shouldered, smooth-faced—

is, or has been, an athlete at Yale or Harvard. Dances well—knows the world—none better! A trifle blasé, perhaps—but such a lady-killer. About right—is n't it?

SHE

Why, how did you know? Who told you?

HE

You did.

SHE

I? Never—I never told a soul except Polly March and Susan Reynolds.

HE

Well—no matter. Tell me some more.

SHE

No—now you tell me about *your* ideal.

HE

Oh, no, I could n't! It would be so embarrassing, you know.

SHE

Why?

HE

[*With killing glance.*] Why—she—she 's so near, you know—she 'd hear me!

SHE

[*Utter surprise.*] You mean—?

HE

[*Nods.*] I kiss the hand of—my ideal!
[*Suits action to word.*]

SHE

Oh, that 's a very pretty speech—but I know—I—I 'm not—

HE

Don't you think it deserves a reward?
[*He kisses her.*]

SHE

Mr. Marvel! What do you mean? Now you 've gone and spoiled it all. And I thought you were so nice. . . .

HE

I am, really. But you did look so adorable, you know—

SHE

Well—come on.

HE

Where?

SHE

Home—of course. I can't ever walk on the beach with you again, because you 're so silly!

HE

[*With faint smile.*] Out of the mouths of babes—I agree with you entirely, Miss Audrey, and I 'll apologize all the way home. I 'll go the entire way on my knees, if you like! [*They walk away briskly.*]

II

SCENE—*Hotel porch.*
MISS AUDREY GAY *meets her best friend,*
POLLY MARCH.

MISS GAY

HELLO, Polly! How are you this morning? Yes, it 's a great day for our sail, is n't it? Oh, yes, I 'm going—are n't you? Who? Mr. Marvel?—why, I don't know; I suppose he is. Thought *I* would n't go without *him?* Why, Polly March, what *do* you mean? You were where? On the beach—last night. Well, what if you were? Saw us? [*Excitedly.*] Polly, you did n't see him . . . Oh, Polly, you *did n't!* Who were you with? Not that Hudson man? Oh, dear—he 'll tell everybody! I may as well tell you the truth about it, Polly March—come over here and sit down.

Now, give me your word of honor—cross your heart and hope to die if you ever breathe a word I 'm going to tell you. Of

course, mamma would be *furious* if it ever got out. Well, you see, Polly, it was like this. We were walking on the beach, and we sat down to rest. Mr. Marvel did n't say anything for a long time, but he sighed and looked at me so sadly—*you* know how sort of oldish and interesting he looks—and so I asked him why he sighed. He said it was because I reminded him of some one he had loved and lost—and then he told me about her. He was engaged to her, and she had hair and eyes like mine —that 's why he likes me. Her name was Evangeline—is n't that romantic? They used to sit on the beach together. And, Polly, he talked so beautifully, and he forgot all about me; he just looked off over the water and whispered, "Evangeline!" and then he leaned over and kissed me. I never was so surprised in my life—and then all at once he came to, and, my dear, I never saw a man feel so terribly about anything. He could n't say enough—he had just forgotten all about me, and dreamed he was with Evangeline. What *could* I do? He was so pathetic, and I felt so sorry for him. But, of course, I scolded him dreadfully.

You think it was mean of me? Well, I had to. I don't know, though; perhaps you are right. After all, it was n't *me* he kissed—it was Evangeline.

There goes the crowd down to the pier—we 'd better hurry, if we 're going. Now, remember, Polly—not a word to a living soul. [*They rush off.*]

III

SCENE—*Hotel porch.*
MARVEL *meets* HUDSON.

MARVEL

How are you, Hudson? Great day, is n't it? The *Pinta* ought to make good time with this wind. What 's that? Did I have a pleasant evening? Why, yes, fairly. What are you driving at? Saw me—*what?* Where were *you?* You old blackguard, what were you hanging around for? Why did n't you whistle? Anybody with you? *Not* that March girl! Good Gad—she 'll spread the good news!

[*Takes him by the arm and walks him.*]

Well, look here, old man, it was like this.

You see, Miss Gay and I had a bet up—a bull pup against a kiss, and, you see, I won. Of course, it was all a joke—but I was brute enough to make her pay up—you know how those things are—huh? Now, of course, it would be rather nasty for the girl if it got about, so I can depend on you to keep it dark, can't I? Much obliged. And, say, shut Miss March up, can't you? I 'll appreciate it very much indeed. Little Miss Gay is a nice sort of child, don't you know—not too much brain, nor anything of that sort, but I would n't have her made uncomfortable about the affair, you know.

Look—they 're pulling up the sails on the *Pinta*—we 'd better be off. There go the girls now. I say—Miss Gay—[*Calls*] Miss March—wait a minute! [*They hurry off.*]

IV

SCENE—*Hotel porch, at night.*
MARVEL *joins* MISS GAY.

HE

MAY I speak to you a minute?

[*They walk to and fro.*]

SHE

I suppose you know it 's all over the hotel.

HE

That 's what I wanted to speak to you about.

SHE

I don't think speaking will do you any good!

HE

I can't imagine who told it—

SHE

[*Hotly.*] Well, I can tell you. It was that Hudson man, who 's such a dear friend of yours.

HE

I beg your pardon—it was the March girl, your chum.

SHE

You 're mistaken. She gave me her word of honor—

HE

Hudson gave me his. But that 's not the point. I acted badly, I know it—I 've gotten you into a scrape, and I want to get you out.

SHE

Well, after that "bet" story you told, I don't see how you expect—

HE

How about "Evangeline"?

SHE

Well, I had to tell something.

HE

So did I. Do you think it would help out if we announced our engagement? We

could make it just as temporary as you like. Of course, I have no particular desire to marry just now—so I would wish it to be a temporary thing; but if it would help you out, why—of course, I 'm a little older than you are, and no doubt you would not *care* to marry me. But if, having clearly understood the situation, we entered into an agreement—

SHE

Great Scott! I never heard such amiable condescension in all my life. Do you think I 'd announce my engagement, temporary or otherwise, to a man of your age?—why, you 're old enough to be my father! Besides —I have no particular desire to marry just now—and if I had, well—it would n't be to a man who hates poetry and novels, and all the things I like. And as for a man who has to trump a story about "bets" to excuse himself for wilfully kissing a girl on a moonlight night—well, I have my opinion of such a craven churl. Do you remember "my ideal" which you described so perfectly last night on the beach? Well, it may interest you to know that he 's a real man—

his name is Bob Crandall, the famous Yale center, and I've been engaged to him for a year. I don't believe he'd care about any "temporary engagements" with old gentlemen. Well, good night. I hope you'll have better luck next time!

[*She strolls off, laughing.*]

WHEN MORNING BREAKS

SCENE—*Nursery: morning.*
Discovered—JIMMY *and* MOLLY *asleep.*
Enter MOTHER.

MOTHER

COME, chickens, come—it 's time to get up. Breakfast in ten minutes. Let us see who can beat getting dressed this morning!

MOLLY

Is it to-morrow?

MOTHER

Yes, dear—now hurry! [*Exit Mother.*]

MOLLY

Jimmy—Jimmy—get up. It 's to-morrow!

JIMMY

Aw—it is not. You 're always wakin' me up to say it 's to-morrow when it ain't!

MOLLY

Well, it is—'cause mamma said so.

JIMMY

Mamma?

MOLLY

Yes, when she came to say "get up."

JIMMY

Did mamma come in here?

MOLLY

Why, 'course!

JIMMY

I did n't hear her—did she, honust Injun?

MOLLY

Cross my heart an' hope to die! An' we have to hurry up. Boo—it 's cold!

JIMMY

First one that gets to the register can have it all to himself to get dressed on!

[*Wild rush for the register.*]

I 'm first!

MOLLY

You were not. I had my foot on first and you shoved me.

JIMMY

Aw—get out! I was on before you got started.

MOLLY

Well, I don't want any, anyhow—it ain't so very cold. 'Sides, there ain't any heat comin' up.

JIMMY

[*Coaxingly.*] Say, Moll, hand me my clothes, will you?

MOLLY

What 'll you do, if I will?

JIMMY

Well, I 'll give you half the register.

MOLLY

All right. Now move over, Jimmy—that ain't half.

JIMMY

Bet I 'll beat gettin' on stockings!

MOLLY

Bet you don't. . . . There!

JIMMY

Aw—you got it on hind side afore! That 's the heel, you big goose!

MOLLY

Poor Mary—did I get your clothes on wrong?

JIMMY

What makes you call that foot Mary?

MOLLY

'Cause that 's her name. An' the other one's name is John.

JIMMY

Mine's names ain't—mine's names is Maud S. and Heatherbloom. I bet mine can beat yours. Say, Moll—I 'll beat you washin'.

MOLLY

Well, you don't wash nice—mamma said so—you just wash a weenty bit in the middle, an' I go all round—an' neck too—sometimes.

JIMMY

No use my washin' my neck, when mamma 's always doin' it. I know boys at school 'at don't never have necks done—never.

MOLLY

Not nice ones. Nice ones allus has their necks did.

JIMMY

Yesterday the teacher said, "Solomon Godowski, when did you have your hands washed?" An' he said, "Las' Wednesday"; an' she made him go right out an' wash them.

MOLLY

I know a girl 'at never has her hair done —not never.

JIMMY

If I had ol' long hair like yours—I 'd cut it off.

MOLLY

[*Meditatively.*] Jimmy—if I did cut it off, would I be a boy, then, like you?

JIMMY

Yep—kind of.

MOLLY

Would I be your brother then?

JIMMY

Yep—kind of.

MOLLY

An' would you play wif me,—tag an' I-spy an' ev'rything?

JIMMY

Sometimes—I would.

MOLLY

Would I be in your gang?

JIMMY

Yep—kind of.

MOLLY

Well—I will. Here is some scissors—now you cut it off.

JIMMY

Say, you 'd better not—mamma 'll be mad.

MOLLY

No—I 'm goin' to be a boy, an' go in your gang.

JIMMY

You 'll get a lickin', if you do.

MOLLY

I don't care if I do—'cause I want to be a boy, an' play, an' not haf to practise, an' not haf to be a lady!

[JAMES *promptly begins to snip. Enter mother.*]

MOTHER

James Baker, what are you doing?

MOLLY

[*Hastily.*] He 's cuttin' off my hair so I 'll be a boy in his gang, an' he 'll play wif me all the time, an' not tease me—

MOTHER

James, I have the greatest notion on earth to give you a good whipping!

JIMMY

Well, she made me.

MOTHER

That 's a nice thing for a great big boy to say about his little sister. " She made me! "

MOLLY

Mudder, can't I have my hair cut off an' be a boy?

MOTHER

My precious baby, that would n't make you a boy. And what would mother do without her girlie? I would n't have her changed for all the boys in the universe!

MOLLY

But girls have to be so nice, an' get hurted, an' teased, an' boys don't. I want to be a boy, mudder.

[*Mother gathers her into her arms.*]

MOTHER

My blessed baby, you 're learning the lesson of feminine limitations very young! Come, Jimmie, never mind the necktie until after breakfast. Come along, lady-bird.

"WHO'S AFRAID?"

It is bedtime for MOLLY *and* JIMMY BAKER, *and mamma is tucking them into their two little beds.*

MAMMA

Now, lie still, Molly dear, and don't kick the covers off!

MOLLY

Mamma, will you leave a little teenty-weenty light burning to-night?

MAMMA

Why, I expect so! Daddy and I will be just down-stairs; if you are frightened you can call.

JIMMY

Ah—she 's the biggest fraidy-cat!

MAMMA

Now, James, none of that! I want no quarreling, nor talking. I want you to go straight to sleep.

[*Mamma turns the light low, kisses them, and goes out.*]

MOLLY

I wish Susie Jones's mother was my mother. *She* leaves the light goin' full tilt, every night—Susie told me so!

JIMMY

Aw, I bet she does not! Susie 's the biggest story-teller in the world, next to you—

MOLLY

Why, I 'm *not* a story-teller, Jimmy Baker!

JIMMY

You are, too, and you 're a tattle-tale—

MOLLY

I am not—I am not—

JIMMY

'Sh! Do you want mamma to come up here and whip you?

[*Silence for a while.*]

MOLLY

Jimmy, will you tell me a story?

JIMMY

No, I 'm goin' to sleep. What 'll you give me if I do?

MOLLY

I 'll give you—a—a—

JIMMY

Will you give me your new jumping-rope?

MOLLY

Oh, Jimmy—not my *new* one! I 'll give you my ol' one! It 's 'mos' as good—it 's *better* 'n my new one!

JIMMY

No—I want the new one, with the handles to make harness with!

MOLLY

Oh, Jimmy!

JIMMY

[*Crossly.*] Well, now, you don't have to, if you don't want to!

MOLLY

[*Meekly.*] Well, I will. But you won't tell one with bears in it, will you?

JIMMY

Aw—you big fraidy-cat! *Who* 's afraid?

[*Jimmy gets up on his elbow, and begins.*]

Oncet upon a time, there was a boy 'at lived in—now—Chicago. And one day he was sassy to his father, and he up and runned away—

MOLLY

Who—his father did?

JIMMY

No, of course not—the boy did! If you 're goin' to interrelupt, I ain't a-goin' to tell it! He did n't like Chicago much, anyway, 'cause he had to go to school there, so he ist up an' walked off to—to New York! An'—when he got to New York, they wuz a pirate ship, there at New York, an' he got right on, and went off to sea. All the pirates wuz black, an' big as—Oh, they wuz awful big—

MOLLY

How big—big as papa?

JIMMY

Big as papa! Why, they wuz giantses! An' every pirate had a carving-knife, and a gun, and a revolover—

MOLLY

What for?

JIMMY

Why, to kill people with, you silly! An' when they found the little boy wuz on the ship, they hauled him out an' licked him with the end of a rope!

MOLLY

Is that worse than the back of a brush?

JIMMY

Aw, lots worse! B-b-but the little boy did n't yell none, when they licked him—he

did n't yell none, so they made him the captain of the ship, 'cause he did n't yell none—an' he said 'at they 'd go to "Cubey Libree" and fight the *Philippeneans!* An' they did. But while they wuz goin' there a big shark—

MOLLY

What 's a shark?

JIMMY

Don't you know what a shark is? Why, it 's a big fish—as big as—as—five elephalunts! With a mouth as big as—this whole house! An' teef as long as from here to the corner; an' if it wanted to—it could swallow all the houses in this block! ! !

MOLLY

[*Faintly.*] Jimmy, can I get into your bed?

JIMMY

Now—don't interrelupt! When the shark saw the pirate ship, he ist swummed right up, and gobbled the ship down!

MOLLY

An' the little boy?

JIMMY

An' the little boy! But he did n't chew it none, 'cause it wuz such a big mouthful—an'—an' when the boy got in the ol' shark's insides, he ist tickled him on his insides, an' the ol' shark coughed him up!

MOLLY

[*Doubtfully.*] Why, Jimmy Baker!

JIMMY

Don't you believe that? THAT 's in the BIBLE! An' soon as the boy got out, he began swimmin', an' swimmin', an' swimmin' —Oh, he wuz ist swimmin' for two months!

MOLLY

Without nothin' to eat?

JIMMY

Oh, he ate fishes! An' purty soon, when he wuz swimmin' along, he came to a beautiful island, an' he went right up on it, an' there wuz a b-e-a-u-t-i-f-u-l princess!

MOLLY

[*Sighing rapturously.*] What 'd she have on?

JIMMY

She had on a-a-yellow curls, an' a crown, an' pink tights, like the girl at the circus! An' when she saw the boy, she said that if he 'd kill all the bears on the island, she 'd marry him an' he 'd be a king or something! So he said he would, an' he waited till it wuz 'mos' dark, an' then he built a fire—

MOLLY

But where wuz the princess?

JIMMY

She wuz in to supper, of course! He made a fire, an' then purty soon he saw great big shinin' eyes, an' a great big mouf 'at went—"WOO! WOO!"

MOLLY

Jimmy! Jimmy! What 's that over in the corner? *It* 's got fiery eyes!

JIMMY

W-w-where? I don't see anything!
[*He takes a cautious peep.*]

MOLLY

It 's a-movin'! It 's a-comin' after us! It 's a bear! Mamma! Mamma!

JIMMY

MAMMA! MAMMA! ! !

THE OPTIMIST

SCENE—*Drawing-room.*
Discovered—MRS. HOWARD *and a caller,*
MRS. MARTIN.

MRS. MARTIN

YES, it *is* nice weather to-day; but, as I said to Mr. Martin this morning, we might just as well make up our minds to a rainy month. March is the *vilest* month in this climate—I always dread it so. I just know I 'll have a relapse and get the grip again. Oh, yes, I 've been sick with it for weeks, and I 'm just able to get out again. I always have things so much harder than any one else. I have n't any strength or appetite, and I just know a rainy spell will set in and put me in bed again. No, I never *do* borrow trouble, but I think it 's well to be prepared for anything. No, my dear, now don't think of making tea on my account; I could n't

swallow a drop. I don't eat a thing—not a thing.

Your husband 's been sick too, has n't he? Threatened with pneumonia? Dear me!—so many have died with it this winter, have n't they? I was threatened with it too, but I fought it off. I think there 's so much in will-power, don't you? He 's out again? Well, that must be a great relief to you. Yes, sugar and lemon in mine.

[*Takes her tea.*]

Have you seen Mrs. Mathews since she lost her husband? Well, from the way she takes on, you 'd think he had been a saint. You know he was a perfect terror. We used to live next door to them, and I know. Why, he used to *swear* at her! But, dear me, she 's forgotten all about it now. Some women are that way, you know. Just a little more, my dear,—it 's so nice,—and one wafer. [*Takes more tea.*]

Did you hear about that Sangster girl? Oh, did n't you? She eloped with a patent-medicine man. Of course, I make it a point never to criticize any one, but I always said that girl would come to some bad end,—she was always laughing and carrying on—

never could take anything seriously! No, they say he 's rich as Rockefeller; but, then, you never can tell—people do say such things. Just a *little* bit more, my dear, with sugar. Yes, I will have a wafer, they are so small. [*Takes more tea.*]

I heard that that Frank Staunton was going into business for himself. Of course, it 's none of my business, but I should think he 'd never dare to make any change, with that flighty wife on his hands. Extravagant?—why, I 've seen her with three different hats on this spring! And flirtatious! You 'd better keep *your* eye on her, my dear; I heard her say that she simply *adored* your husband. Goodness, I should n't think you 'd ever have a moment's peace with such a handsome husband on your hands. We were talking about it the other day, and saying how strange it was that handsome men always marry plain women. Just one more cup—no—yes, I will have another wafer.

[*Takes more tea.*]

Did you hear about the new baby at the Dickson's? No—a girl. Yes, that 's four. Of course I don't want to say anything disagreeable, but I think the law ought to take

children away from that sort of mothers. *Devoted mother? Mrs. Dickson?* Why, my dear, she bathes a three months' baby in *almost* cold water, and lets it sleep on the porch in the winter time! And she puts it to bed at eight o'clock, just like a grown person,—turns down the light and *leaves* it. Never rocks it, nor walks with it. Well, all I 've got to say is, that was not called "devoted" when I was a young married woman! Well—just one drop more, and one wafer. [*Takes more tea.*]

I *must* go. I want to be home when Mr. Martin comes. I feel sure that he is coming down with something dreadful—he looked so strange this morning. So many business men are dropping off these days. No, dear; no more. I 'm sorry I could n't do justice to your tea, but I can't touch a thing. Good-by—*do* come see me. I 'll run in again and cheer you up. I hope your husband will come around all right. Adieu! [*Exit.*]

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